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Supporting perceived wellbeing in a self-managing organization

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Abstract

The megatrends like global competition and increasing amount of knowledge-based work are changing the environment and caused many organisations to choose self-management as their way to organise. In self-managing companies there are no supervisors which usually means less monitoring and regulations for the worker. As the worker also lacks the support of a supervisor it means that they have very different wellbeing challenges and possibilities than workers in traditional hierarchical organizations.

This qualitative study was conducted as a part of Mode research which focuses on self-managing organizations. The 20 semi-structured interviews conducted in two companies were all done using the same interview themes that are used in every Mode interview.

The findings highlight the significance of wellbeing at self-managing organisations. The perceived support that the employees experience is highly caused by the actions the company conducts for the wellbeing of the workers. The findings also indicate that the resources that a supervisor in traditional companies provide for their subordinates, can also be provided by HR-team and co-workers.

The two case companies also supported the wellbeing of their workers by many ways that are not related to self-management. These actions were highly appreciated by the employees and the actions improved the employer image in the eyes of the workers.

Keywords self-managing organisations, self-management, wellbeing, supporting wellbeing, perceived appreciation, qualitative research, resources, hindrances, challenges

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Tiivistelmä

Megatrendit kuten kasvava globaalikilpailu ja tietotyön lisääntyminen muuttavat yritysten toimintaympäristöä ja ovat saaneet monet yritykset valitsemaan itseohjautuvuuden oman organisoitumisensa tavaksi. Itseohjautuvissa organisaatioissa työntekijöillä ei ole esimiestä ja tyypillisesti yrityksissä on myös vähemmän sääntöjä ja valvontaa. Itseohjautuvissa organisaatioissa työntekijät jäävät ilman esimiehen tukea ja työntekijät kohtaavat hyvin erilaiset hyvinvointihaasteet ja -mahdollisuudet kuin työntekijät perinteisissä organisaatioissa.

Tämä laadullinen tutkimus toteutettiin osana itseohjautuvia organisaatioita tutkivaa Mode-hanketta. Tutkimuksen 20 teemahaastattelua kahdessa kohdeyrityksessä toteutettiin samojen haastatteluteemojen mukaan kuin muut Moden osana toteutetut haastattelut.

Tutkimuksen löydökset korostavat hyvinvoinnin tukemisen merkitystä itseohjautuvissa organisaatioissa. Työntekijöiden kokemus tuki koostuu pitkälti niistä asioista, joita organisaatio tekee jäsentensä hyvinvoinnin edistämiseksi. Tutkimus osoittaa itseohjautuvassa myös, että HR-tiimi ja muut työntekijät voivat tarjota työntekijälle resurssit, jotka korvaavat perinteisessä organisaatiossa esimiehen tuottamat resurssit.

Tutkimuksen kohteena olleet organisaatiot tukivat jäsentensä hyvinvointia lukuisilla tavoilla, joista suuri osa ei liity suoranaisesti itseohjautuvuuteen. Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että työntekijät arvostavat suuresti näitä hyvinvointia tukevia toimia ja niillä on suuri vaikutus organisaation kuvaan työnantajana.

Avainsanat Itseohjautuva organisaatio, itseohjautuvuus, hyvinvointi, hyvinvoinnin tukeminen, koettu hyvinvointi, laadullinen tutkimus, resurssi

Kiitokset

Kiitokset Jari Ylitalolle ja Tuukka Kostamolle diplomityön kommentoinnista ja Tuukalle kiinnostavan mahdollisuuden tarjoamisesta MODen tutkimusryhmässä. Kiitokset molemmille diplomityössä mukana olleille organisaatioille ja erityisesti yhteyshenkilöille sujuvasta yhteistyöstä haastatteluiden osalta.

Uusi vuosikymmen on alkanut ja Otaniemen vuosikymmeneni on jäänyt taakse. Vuodet Otaniemessä ovat kasvattaneet paljon. Niin taidot kuin tapa katsoa maailmaa ovat muuttuneet merkittävästi sitten fuksisyksyn. Kiitos tästä kaikesta kuuluu ennen muuta sille ainutlaatuiselle yhteisölle, joka tällä kampuksella vaikuttaa. Niiden lukuisten kohtaamisten ja ystävien määrää ja merkitystä on vaikea ymmärtää. Näistä ystävistä ja lukuisista kohtaamisista olen erittäin kiitollinen.

Otaniemessä viettämiäni vuosia värittää vahvasti ne monet porukat ja toimikunnat, joiden kanssa on päästy kokeilemaan omia rajoja ja ymmärtämään, että kaikki isotkin asiat on saanut aikaan vain joukko pieniä ihmisiä. Kiitos Prodeko, kiitos hallitukset '14 ja '15, Kiitokset IE '14 ja Neuvosto '15, kiitokset Diskonttaus-tiimit 48 ja 50.

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1. Introduction

Self-management is currently a real buzzword at least in Finland. More and more companies have chosen self-management as their way of working in the last decade as the megatrends like global competition and the increasing amount of knowledge-based work are changing the environment (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Many of these companies that have chosen self-management operate in rapidly changing and highly competitive industries. Their motivated workers face many sources of stress which they must face without supervisors' support. Ensuring their wellbeing is crucial for the business but especially for the workers themselves.

In this thesis, an organisation is considered as self-managing as when it has radically decentralized authority. These organisations do not have hierarchical reporting relationship between manager and subordinate. Job descriptions of individual workers are defined by themselves or by their teams. Lee and Edmondson (2017) call these organizations as organizations that have a radical approach to self-management.

Self-management is not something new, but there are a few things that have already increased its popularity and anticipate a much more significant role for self-management in the coming years. First, globalization and increasing speed of information spreading have increased the competition in many fields. To be able to succeed in such a competitive environment, the organization needs to agile and adapt fast to new changes (Lee and Edmondson, 2017; Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Second, the amount of employees doing knowledge-based work is growing (Lee and Edmondson, 2017; Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Third, the developed information technology has made it possible to share information so effectively also in larger groups that it makes

possible to succeed with self-management even with more challenging organisations that previously would have failed (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Many organisations seem to chosen self-management to increase adaptability and agility (Martela, 2017) or to empower their employees (Houghton and Yoho, 2005).

While many of the workers in self-managing organisations are exposed rapidly, changing very competitive and stressful environments, they lack the support of a supervisor. Due to this situation, the worker has a broader responsibility for his or her wellbeing. However, these organisations often have a lot of freedom and flexibility so that in the best case, the employees might be able to create perfect personalised conditions for them to work. This master's thesis tries to enhance the understanding of how self-management affects wellbeing and generate knowledge for the self-managing organisations as they try to improve the wellbeing of their members. To my knowledge, there is no previous research combining self-managing organisations and wellbeing.

Wellbeing at work has been studied already at the end of the 19th century. However, the mental side with demands, sources of stress and resources have been studied mainly after 1980. Mental wellbeing has been studied a lot in the last four decades. Most of this research has been conducted with quantitative methods such as questionnaires where the worker had ranked marked 1-5 how stressed they are, like Demerouti *et al.* (2001) in their widely referred study. Qualitative research that would focus on the feelings of the workers based on interviews has been rare. In this case, the research aims to gather experiences of the workers to understand the issue better, so interviewing was selected as a method.

In this research, the main objective is to reveal how people perceive their wellbeing and which factors they think are related to their wellbeing. Through these findings, the second target is to generate some practical implications for self-managing organizations to concentrate on if they want to improve the perceived wellbeing of their members.

For achieving these objectives, this research has two research questions.

RQ 1

What are the factors connected to perceived wellbeing in self-managing organisations?

In self-managing organisations, there are fewer formal rules, and personal decisions of the workers' have more impact on the workers' actions. Still, every organisation has its shared habits and values. This research tries to find out how these habits and values influence the wellbeing of the workers and how the workers see the things that affect their wellbeing. The second research question is:

RQ 2

How can a company support the perceived wellbeing of its workers?

The qualitative study has been conducted by interviewing twenty employees in two self-managing organizations. The interviews in this study are semi-structured, and they all follow the same preset themes. The interviews' focus on the interviewees' feelings and experiences on the wellbeing of themselves and their colleagues as well as the reasons behind these feelings and experiences.

This thesis is a part of Minimalist Organizational Design research (Mode). Mode studies different factors about self-management in partnership with

seven Finnish organisations that are self-managing or tend to transfer towards self-management in the future. Mode research is broadly discussed in section 3.2.2.

This thesis contains four main chapters. At the next chapter, I will present the theoretical basis of these two topics – self-management and wellbeing. The third chapter is about methodology, and it explains how this research has been carried out. Chapter 4 is about findings and through many quotes, I show how the workers at the two organisations think about wellbeing. Finally, in chapter 5, I put the findings into context and discuss their value.

2. Literature review

In this chapter, I will introduce the basic principles of self-management in organizations and wellbeing. Although, as far as I know, there are no studies that would handle both subjects together, after I have separately introduced self-management and wellbeing, I will shortly synthesize how I think these two influence each other. This theme combining section concentrates the workers' position with a lot of autonomy and without a supervisor in a rapidly changing competitive environment. Wellbeing wise self-managing organisation gives excellent possibilities but also many challenges which increase the role of the workers themselves.

Three megatrends are going on, which are likely to increase the amount of self-managing organisations in the coming years (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Globalisation and more rapidly moving information are making many industries more complex and competitive, more and more jobs require expertise and independent decision making and improved it solutions enable larger groups to communicate effectively (Martela and Jarenko, 2017).

2.1. Self-management

Self-management means that employees or teams manage and monitor their work on their own (Manz and Sims, 1980). The workers do not have a supervisor or any other person whose responsibility would be to make sure that the employee reaches his or her goals and that they would play by the rules and company policies. The workers and the teams themselves have the responsibility to match their actions and decisions with the goals and regulations of the organization and decide how they could make them real. In

this thesis, a self-managing organisation is an organization that "radically decentralizes authority in a formal and systematic way throughout the organization" as Lee and Edmondson (2017) have defined the term.

In this thesis, traditional or hierarchical organization means an organization that has a hierarchy of formal authority which is distributed in a classical pyramid way that fewer people on the top have authority over the lower levels (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). Information transfers through the steps of the hierarchy and the highest senior managers coordinate the acts of the organization (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Martela and Jarenko (2017) mention General Motors as an example of this kind of traditional hierarchical organization.

In addition to Lee and Edmondson's (2017) article, there are very few peer-reviewed articles about self-managing organizations. This lack of proper articles is also one of the main reasons why Mode research exists and why I have used so many not peer-reviewed sources of information in this chapter.

2.1.1. Background of self-management

Some organisations have tried less hierarchical ways to handle management already decades ago (Laloux, 2014). Senthil, Jane and Bret (2005) define a self-managing team as "teams that are able to regulate their behaviour on relatively whole tasks for which they have been established, including making decisions about work assignments, work methods, and scheduling of activities". Self-managing teams were used in English coal mines already in the 1950s (Barker, 1993). Self-managing teams gained popularity during the 1970s and 1980s (Bernstein *et al.*, 2016). In 1990, 47% of Fortune 1000 companies were using

self-managed teams at least with some employees to “improve productivity, quality and morale and to reduce costs” (Cohen, Ledford and Spreitzer, 1996). In 1999 this number reached to 72% (Senthil, Jane and Bret, 2005). These benefits that the organisations tried to achieve were also proven in multiple studies (Cohen, Ledford and Spreitzer, 1996; Senthil, Jane and Bret, 2005). Still, self-managing teams did not become a norm. The trend of team characteristics in Finland can be seen in Figure 1, where team autonomy has decreased since the 1990s. Since 1985 several features and effects of self-managed teams were studied (Markham and Markham, 1995). First, the most studied features were the functional and economic outcomes and how self-managed teams increased organisational productivity, profitability and employee satisfaction (Barker, 1993). Later on, many other subjects have been studied like team effectiveness and contribution to organisational innovativeness (Senthil, Jane and Bret, 2005). These self-managing teams worked under hierarchical organisation unlike the teams in self-managing organisations which do not have a hierarchical structure above them.

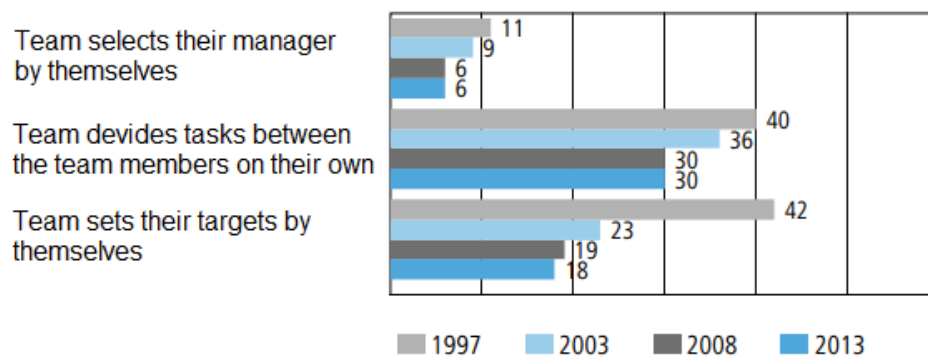


Figure 1, Team characteristics in Finland

(Sutela and Lehto, 2014)

Self-managing organisations where the whole company is based on self-management have been studied very little. Those few studies, like Lee and Edmondson (2017), are mainly based on documentations written from a dozen

companies. Those same around a dozen companies are used as examples in Laloux's book *Reinventing Organizations* (2014). Research in which the researcher would have been in direct contact with the self-managing organization has been done even less.

2.1.2. Characteristics of a self-managing organization

Self-managing organizations have totally removed the managers from the organization (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). They have a formal and systematic way of how decision making and power are decentralized throughout the whole organization. There are no hierarchical reporting and monitoring relationships between managers and subordinates. An important aspect is also that this system is there to be not just something that is to be used during the smooth and easy times but also for hard times and tough decisions (Lee and Edmondson, 2017).

As Lee and Edmondson (2017) say, self-managing organisations “decentralize authority in a formal and systematic way”. As there are no managers, the principals and basic rules which are the basis of the way of working must be clear to everyone. To it easier for companies to transfer to self-management, there are some readymade codified ways for organizing without managers. Sociocracy is an open-source solution, and it has its roots 19th century Netherlands (*History of Sociocracy*, 2019). During the last decade, Sociocracy has been processed into two well-known and documented forms called Sociocracy 3.0 and Holacracy. The first version of Holacracy was published in 2009 (Robertson, 2014). Sociocracy 3.0 was “launched as an open-source framework in March 2015” (Bockelbrink, Priest and David, 2017). Both of these documented full solutions offer a basis for an organization to start with and to

modify. Hundreds of organizations have begun self-management with Holacracy as their basis and avoided many trials and errors during their journeys (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). Still, many have started with their entirely own way of self-management (Laloux, 2014).

Self-managing organisations have existed for years. However, the need for flatter organizing is now increasing and also the new technology has come to help with the problems commonly connected with self-managing organisations. Especially communication applications like Slack make it possible for many more people to communicate directly and efficiently straight with each other. This makes it easier for also larger and more complex organizations to succeed with self-managing structure (Martela and Jarenko, 2017).

In one of the most known self-managing companies, Morning Star, self-management means that everybody needs to step up when they are the closest person of the issue in hand (Bernstein et al., 2016). One team member at Morning Star summed their management structure: “Around here, nobody’s your boss, and everybody’s your boss” (Hamel, 2011). Everyone is allowed to suggest improvements and use company money (Hamel, 2011). While there are typically fewer rules in self-managing organisations, the significance of these rules is highlighted. It is also essential that everyone have the same rights, and everyone plays by the same rules (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). It is crucial that everybody is familiar with the commonly agreed rules and that there are no specific people or situation where these rules do not apply (Lee and Edmondson, 2017).

The basic unit for everything is a team (Bernstein et al., 2016). As the team makes most of the decisions concerning their work on their own, the size of a team must be limited to a number of people that can effectively communicate

to each other on a personal level. For example, at Buurtzorg, a Dutch health care organization, the maximum number of nurses per team is limited to twelve (Laloux, 2014).

To be able to make the right decision for the whole company not just to one-self, everybody needs to have access to almost all information through the entire company. The financial numbers and key performance indicators are critical information for many decisions, and so they must be available for everyone as easily as possible.

If there are no hierarchy or leaders, there cannot be promotion either (Hamel, 2011). This means that the job and one's place in the organization can only change horizontally, not vertically.

2.1.3. Individuals in self-managing organisations

Self-leadership is a personal skill to be able to work and lead oneself with his or her initiative without guidance (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Neck and Houghton (2006) defined self-leadership as “a process through which people influence themselves to achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform”. To be capable of self-leadership, a person needs to know the goal they are working for, and they need to have the required skills and knowledge to reach that goal (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). Most self-managing organisations rely heavily on self-leadership, while self-leadership can happen in hierarchical organisations as well. While self-leadership requires skills from the worker, the positive side is that self-leadership is likely to facilitate empowerment in the workers (Houghton and Yoho, 2005). Empowerment happens by “enhancing perceptions of meaningfulness,

purpose, self-determination, competence and self-efficacy” (Houghton and Yoho, 2005). More about motivation, which is a concept closely related to self-leadership, can be found at chapter 2.2.5.

A self-managing organisation cannot succeed without highly motivated workers who are willing to organise themselves and lead themselves so that it is beneficial for the employee as well as for the company (Kostamo and Martela, 2017).

2.1.4. Organisational promises and pitfalls of self-management

“Management is the least efficient activity in your organisation” argues Gary Hamel (2011). In self-managing organisations, there are no people in the payroll whose main task would be supervising others; everyone is there to do the real job. Management is all about trying to get more reliability and adaptability without creating too many costs (Bernstein *et al.*, 2016). In traditional management, the reliability and efficiency have captured most of the attention, and so the adaptability and agility have suffered. To be a more innovative, nimble and enriching place to work a growing number of organizations have started to look for an alternative way to organize (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). Increasing the speed of change and increase in knowledge-based work makes it harder and harder for managers to achieve enough information for making the right decisions. The continuous need for getting approval for also slows down the organization so that it might not be able to match with the competition (Martela and Jarenko, 2017). The old hierarchical system is excellent for stable, slowly changing circumstances, but rapidly changing environments often call for more flexibility (Paju, 2017). In uncertain

environments, employees are increasingly needed to “create change in how in how jobs, roles and tasks are executed” (Grant and Parker, 2009).

Lee and Edmondson (2017) divide those organizations looking to solve this problem into two groups. The first groups of organizations try to modify the current hierarchical system to match better for the new needs. These modifications may increase the autonomy of the worker, but the managers are still maintained (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). These organizations have “an incremental approach to the issue”. Then there is the other group which I, like Lee and Edmondson, mean when talking about self-organizing organizations or self-managing organizations. Lee and Edmondson (2017) call this group the one who has a radical approach to the problem.

In stable industries where optimisation and cost-cutting are more important than agility and ability to adapt to change hierarchical system is likely to work very well. Every piece of the process can be coordinated as a part of the entire process, and every step can be matched to each other (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). Managers are used to establishing goals, resolve disagreements and ensure that subordinates accomplish their work (Lee and Edmondson, 2017).

Running a self-managing organisation requires significant self-leadership skills from the workers (Markham and Markham, 1995). Buurtzorg’s example shows that these self-leadership skills do not limit to white-collar workers but the CEO Jos De Blok tells that self-management is not for everyone, and some of the employees decide to leave as they prefer traditional hierarchical structure (Laloux, 2014). Working under a hierarchical organisation for an extended time may have eliminated the opportunities to learn those self-leadership skills that are required in self-managing organisations (Pearce and Manz, 2005).

In self-management team, the members are themselves responsible for working the right way for the right direction and avoid free riders (Martela, 2017). As there is no manager to ensure this to happen, the incentives must be taken care of by other means. In a positive situation, the workers are self-motivated to work for the organisational goals put also peer-based controlling systems can be used. Barker (1993) presents an example where the peer-based controlling mechanisms go too far and become harmful for the organisation.

2.2. Work-related wellbeing

In this chapter, I present a few theories that are closely linked to wellbeing at work, especially in highly competitive surrounding and among highly motivated workers.

2.2.1. Wellbeing research in the past

Wellbeing has been studied already in the late 19th century, but the focus of the research has changed over time (Vartiainen, 2017). Working conditions have continuously improved during the time, and the same improvement is still going on. For example, the number of fatal accidents in five years in Finland was 548 in 1975 – 1979 and 107 in 2012 – 2016 (*Suomen virallinen tilasto (SVT): Työtapaturmat*, 2016). This still has not made wellbeing research less relevant, but during the last half of a century, wellbeing studies have focused more on mental wellbeing. Stress and mental challenges which are at the focus in this research have been studied since the 1980s (Vartiainen, 2017). In Finland, 48% of workers think that their work is mentally hard or very hard, and among workers with higher education, the percentage is 61 (Sutela and Lehto, 2014).

In Finland in 2013 28 % of workers said they were tired or had low energy levels, 32 % had sleeping problems, 15 % felt tensioned, and 9 % felt overstrained (Sutela and Lehto, 2014).

In the last 15 years, the workers of a company have been generally realised to be one of the most critical resources and assets of that company (Vartiainen, 2017). To take care and measure the wellbeing of this vital asset job, the demands-resources model has become to be the most used framework in valuating employee wellbeing (Vartiainen, 2017).

Although wellbeing has been studied so much, there is not a generally accepted definition for the concept or even for the way it should be spelt (Dodge et al., 2012). To define wellbeing, researchers have often tried to rely on another term that would have a slightly commonly agreed definition. Pollard and Lee (2003) said that wellbeing is an inherently positive state - happiness. Diener and Suh (1997) said that wellbeing is life satisfaction. In a British national study aiming ways to support the wellbeing of UK citizens, wellbeing was defined as “ability to fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society” (Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project: Final Project Report, 2008).

Most work-related wellbeing studies are form-based quantitative studies. Those studies have created many links between different factors in the workplace, and specific symptoms of the employee, like Kalimo *et al.* (2003) found reasons for burnout. These studies have aimed mostly on creating new frameworks and theories. There are very few qualitative studies that would be based on the knowledge that the workers already have of their environment. In organisations where the levels of skill and motivation are high, the knowledge of the employees is the basis for development and research.

As can be seen from above, there is no single clear definition for wellbeing, but the different definitions are not in conflict with each other. Nonetheless, the approaches divide into two different perspectives that affect the way how wellbeing should be measured. The first one, the hedonic tradition, concentrates on the feelings and perceived wellbeing and the second, the eudaimonic tradition, has a bit more medical approach as it concentrates on functioning and development of the person (Dodge *et al.*, 2012). Like the interviewees in their answers, I mainly concentrate on the hedonic approach where feelings of the interviewees are in the centre, and no heart rate or blood pressure is measured to find out the stress level among the interviewees.

2.2.2. Models of healthy work

Robert A. Karasek (1979) created a model to evaluate the relationship between job demands and job decision latitude in causing job strain. Karasek found out that high job demands, combined with low job latitude, is likely to create exhaustion and depression. Low job latitude also caused job dissatisfaction and life dissatisfaction no matter of the job demands (Karasek, 1979). Higher job demands created more exhaustion and depression but did not cause serious effect on job dissatisfaction or life dissatisfaction.

Karasek also made an interesting finding that at high levels of job decision latitude and increase in authority might even cause exhaustion and depression (Karasek, 1979). This means that gathering more decision latitude to certain managers is likely to increase their stress. Karasek also points out that Taylorism has caused people to think in ways about job decision latitude that might be, in many cases, untrue (Karasek, 1979). This can still be seen in real life 40 years after Karasek's article.

The origin of job demands resource model can be seen from several other models like the demands-control model by Karasek (1979) (Hakanen, J. & Roodt, 2010). During the last decades, the job demands-resources model have become the most used framework for reviewing and measuring wellbeing at work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Job resources divide all aspects that affect a person's wellbeing into demands or resources depending if their affection is positive or negative (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Compared to other similar models JD-R is able to take into account all the affecting demands and resources as other models that have preselected list about each group of reasons may leave other reasons out of scope (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Taking all kinds of job demands into account is essential as job demands vary a lot from occupation to occupation (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). Running into burnout seems to be possible in every occupation even though the demands and hindrances causing the state may be completely different (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001).

Demands can be divided into two different groups by the way they affect the workers' performance, challenges and hindrances. Challenges are the ones which affect positively on performance (LePine, Podsakoff and LePine, 2005). These are the hard tasks in the work that must be done and get the worker forward. Hindrances, however, are demands that decrease productivity (LePine, Podsakoff and LePine, 2005; Podsakoff, LePine and LePine, 2007). For example, a wrong tool or adverse working conditions are hindrances that are a source of stress for the worker but do not have any positive effect of working. Hindrances cause more strain than challenges, and as challenges increase job satisfaction and commitment hindrances lower them (Podsakoff, LePine and LePine, 2007). Hindrances also increase withdrawal behaviour in employees and make them leave the organization where challenges do not cause such actions (Podsakoff, LePine and LePine, 2007). As a company wants to keep the productivity up and increase wellbeing, they should concentrate on the

cutting of as many hindrances as possible (LePine, Podsakoff and LePine, 2005).

One fascinating feature of the JD-R model is how the number of demands and resources affect the worker. Even though resources compensate for the effects of demands, it does not work only so that demands and resources can be counted by numbers. Demands are closely linked to energy levels of the worker and resources are more linked to motivation and job engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Decreasing job demands like the workload is likely to leave the worker more energy, but it will not improve his or her work engagement. That can only be done by increasing job resources. On the same way giving more resources to the worker will be likely to motivate him or her and increase job engagement, but it will not help with the energy levels of the worker (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The two sources for motivation are the resources and good results of the work (Tims and Bakker, 2010).

Self-determination theory presented by Deci and Ryan (1985) presents three factors that build autonomous motivation in all people. The theory claims that all people need individual competence, relatedness and autonomy to have the autonomous motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2008). These three things are closely related to many other topics handled in this chapter. Need for competence is closely linked to person-job fit, lack of relatedness is a significant source of stress, and a sufficient amount of autonomy is one of the critical issues in self-managing organisations. Having this autonomous or intrinsic motivation is likely to foster work engagement, discussed more in chapter 2.2.4 (Schaufeli, Taris and Van Rhenen, 2008).

2.2.3. Potential sources of work-related stress

Stress-related questions are common in various wellbeing surveys carried out in almost every larger organization. However, these results vary significantly between different occupations. “A shortened stress evaluation tool (ASSET)” was created by Faragher, Cooper and Cartwright and published in 2004. Their test is mostly based on the list of stress sources by Cooper and Marshall (1976) but is updated to the 21st century (Faragher, Cooper and Cartwright, 2004). In their survey, they go through the following categories of possible sources of stress which are presented in Table 1.

1. Perception of your work	If the worker feels pressure or stress from a particular source
2. Work relationships	Relationships the worker has between his or her colleagues and boss and the support he or she is getting from them
3. Your job	How the worker feels about the fundamental nature of his or her work. Contains also physical conditions and possible problems
4. Overload	The worker finds that the amount of work is too much for his or her time and resources.

5. Control	Whether the worker feels that they have enough control over their work or not.
6. Job security	Does the worker feel that losing their work and not getting a new as a suitable position is a real threat?
7. Resources and communication	Includes equipment, resources, training, feedback as well as the perceived quality of communication
8. Work-life balance	The amount that the work interferes the personal and home life and puts a strain on relationships outside work.
9. Pay and benefits	If the payment is not enough for leading a wanted lifestyle, it can be a source of stress.

Table 1, Sources of stress in traditional organisations

(Faragher, Cooper and Cartwright, 2004)

There have been studies that focus on the link between different stress sources and burnout. In figure 1 (Kalimo *et al.*, 2003) is presented the most significant changes in how workers felt the different resources between 1986 and 1996. The study group consisted of workers who had symptoms of severe burnout in 1996 and workers who had no burnout symptoms. Only variables that changed significantly among the group are presented at the figure. In the group that had significant symptoms of burnout the resources and job characteristics that had changed the most during the ten years supported by

superior, co-operation, autonomy, organisational climate and sense of coherence. In the group that had no symptoms of burnout the most changed resources and job characteristics were sense on coherence, job complexity, role clarity, feedback and work appreciation (Kalimo *et al.*, 2003).

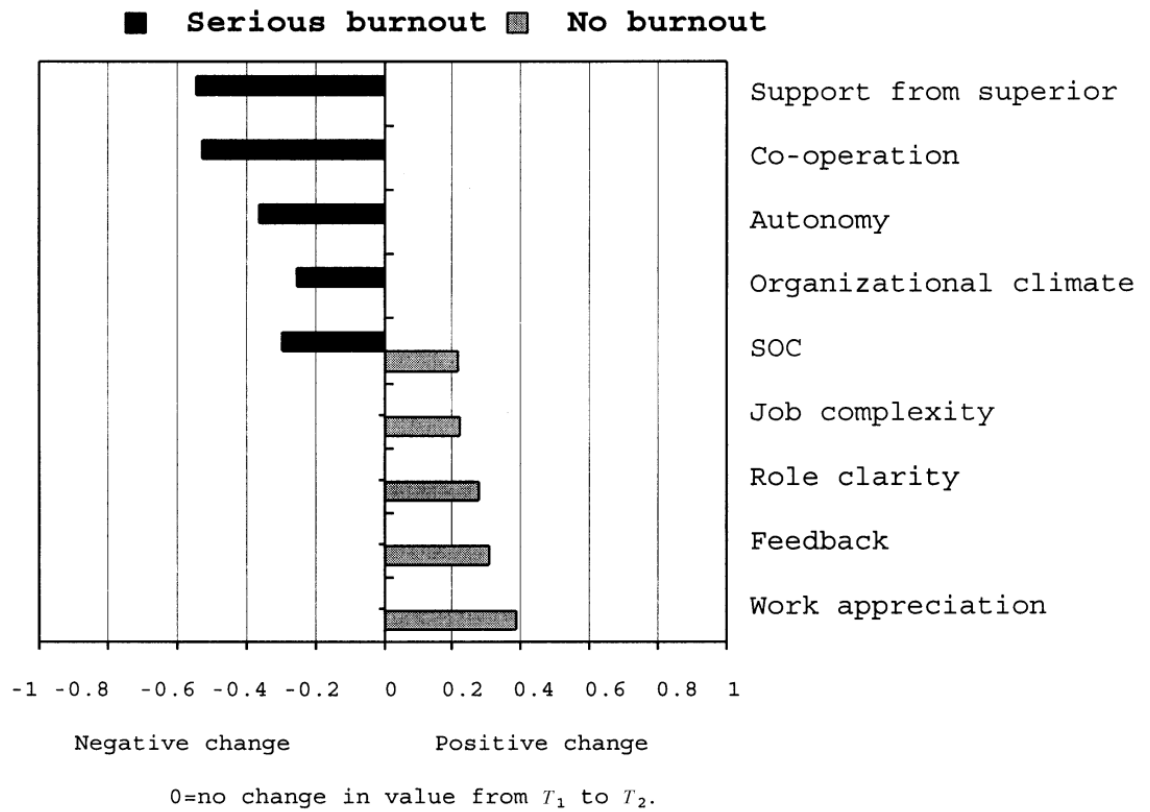


Figure 2, Resources and job characteristics with and without burnout symptoms

SOC = sense of coherence

(Kalimo *et al.*, 2003)

2.2.4. Job engagement and workaholism

It is a common understanding that in high performing organizations, work may possess quite a significant role in people's lives and so consume most of their time and energy. However, there are two different states of mind that a

person can have while working a lot, and these two states have very different consequences to a person's life and wellbeing.

An engaged worker has a positive attitude and intrinsic motivation towards his or her work. Engaged workers also have high energy levels and are enthusiastic about their work (Bakker et al., 2008). Also, terms involvement, commitment, passion, vigour, absorption and focused effort are associated with work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). In addition to wellbeing, an engaged worker is also productive and committed to the organization (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). Where more commonly known term, flow means a relatively short experience that takes place while executing a single task; engagement can be a semi-permanent state that is not connected to only single action but a job in general (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Workaholics have many of these same characteristics as engaged workers as they also are hardworking, dedicated and involved in their work but unlike engaged workers, they have a compulsive drive towards the work like many other addicted people (Taris, Schaufeli and Shimazu, 2010). Workaholic people tend to work compulsively as engaged people do not (Taris, Schaufeli and Shimazu, 2010).

Work engagement is related to the vast amount of self-observation as workaholism is not (Zeijen, Peeters and Hakanen, 2018). So, engaged workers usually have well-thought reasons and inner motivation as a reason why they work a lot while workaholics may not. A high amount of job and personal resources are likely to foster work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2010). Recovery during leisure time is a resource that is likely to change high job demands into challenges and that way support engagement over burn-out (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Sonnentag, Dormann and Demerouti, 2010).

Workaholics are more likely than other people to work overtime and outside working hours. This leads them to neglect their other life outside work (Bakker *et al.*, 2013). This is likely to lead to problems with social relationships and personal health (Bakker *et al.*, 2013). Workaholism is widely associated with poor relationship quality, problems with physical and psychological health (Andreassen, Ursin and Eriksen, 2007; Bakker, Demerouti and Burke, 2009; Bakker *et al.*, 2013). These health issues are likely to include problems like exhaustion, depression and anxiety (Schaufeli, Taris and Van Rhenen, 2008).

2.2.5. Factors that support wellbeing

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health has released two booklets during the past few years to instruct companies how they could support the wellbeing of their workers (Puttonen, Hasu and Pahkin, 2016; Laitinen *et al.*, 2018). Both booklets highlight that that work-related wellbeing consists of numerous little things and the workplace and occupation greatly influence to the best ways of supporting worker wellbeing. To summarise the points mental and physical variation is likely to be beneficial and supporting general healthy habits like diet, sleeping routines, and physical exercising pay off. Support from co-workers and good relationships at the workplace are beneficial (Laitinen *et al.*, 2018). Supporting the workers' motivation to take care of themselves is an integral part of the process (Laitinen *et al.*, 2018). The general attitude at the workplace must support individuals making healthy decisions.

At office work, the focus is on support from co-workers and mental strains like being too busy. Also, physical aspects can be challenging with workers who sit too much and exercise too little. Possibilities to affect one's working hours

or do remote work are likely to support wellbeing (Puttonen, Hasu and Pahkin, 2016).

At this section, I show a few individual concepts that can affect workers' wellbeing and are closely related to issues that emphasized in self-managing organisations. I selected perceived organisational support theory as the workers in self-managing organisations lack the support of a supervisor; job-crafting because there is no supervisor to modify the content of the work for the worker and finally person-job fit and person-organisation fit because they are closely linked with motivation and willingness to do one's best for the company.

Perceived organisational support

It has been found that perceived organizational support reduces mental strain (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). The effect is mainly caused by the employee knowing that aid will be available if needed (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Perceived organizational support means that the employee has the understanding that the employer appreciates their contribution and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Eisenberger et al. (1986) also claim that perceived organizational support is one image that the employee has, and it might consist of many unrelated findings. After the employee feels that organization cares about their employees or not it has many effects on several different aspects like motivation, organizational commitment and desire to remain at the company (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

Idiosyncratic deals, often shortened i-deals, mean personal deals that employees have individually negotiated with their employer to customize their job or compensation or other personal arrangements (Grant and Parker,

2009; Hornung *et al.*, 2010). With these personal arrangements, employee and employer try to find better person-job fit and by doing so grow the value created for both sides (Hornung *et al.*, 2010). As job crafting is mainly limited to things that are not regulated by the job-contract, idiosyncratic deals can affect things like salary, working hours or holidays (Hornung *et al.*, 2010). Through idiosyncratic deals, it is so possible to reduce stressors and increase mental health and wellbeing (Hornung *et al.*, 2010). A four-day working week or reduced working hours for the parents of small children are widespread examples of idiosyncratic deals in Finland.

Job crafting

In self-managing organisations making the content of the work match the personal desires of the worker is mainly on the workers own responsibility. Therefore, the importance of job crafting highlights at self-managing organisations. Job crafting means an action that employee independently takes to change somehow or tweak their work content or way of working (Zeijen, Peeters and Hakanen, 2018). This means changing the boundaries, conditions, interpersonal relations or meaning of one's work (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001; Tims and Bakker, 2010; Tims, Bakker and Derks, 2013). Changing the meaning or idea about the work is closely related to the identity of the worker, which has a significant impact on motivation and to the way of working (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). For example, a salesperson selling fire alarms can be growing sales to get money for the company, saving the jobs his or her friends in the manufacturing process or creating lifesaving solutions for the customer. Although it is still mainly about the same sales actions changing the whole meaning of employees work (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). In job crafting the initiative is done by the worker, and the actions are usually

done to make the work better for him or her. These actions might be beneficial or harmful for the company as the employee does them to improve their work and “make the job their own” (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). By job crafting the worker can increase the resources in his or hers work and in some situations also reduce the amount of demands. In other words, this means affecting and changing the job demands and resources that are present at the person’s work (Tims and Bakker, 2010).

Job crafting is positively associated with work engagement (Petrou *et al.*, 2012; Tims, Bakker and Derks, 2013). It has also been proven that more proactive workers tend to do more job crafting and so get more engaged with their work. This leads to more proactive workers being more satisfied with their work (Plomp *et al.*, 2016). Job crafting is also known as active job redesign by an individual, but in this thesis, I use the term job crafting (Tims and Bakker, 2010).

From the workers perspective job, crafting has apparent positive effects. From the employer’s side, the issue is not as simple. People crafting their jobs may lead to beneficial or harmful effects for the employer as the employee does the crafting to improve their job (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). However, if the employee possesses organizational citizenship kind of mindset, he or she is more likely to take the company’s interest into account when they are crafting their jobs (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Here are some positive impacts on the employee.

Job crafting can lead to better person-job fit for the worker (Tims, Derks and Bakker, 2016). In this context person-job fit means two things: First the match between demands of the work and the abilities of the worker and second the match between the needs of the worker and the supplies the work gives. This better match is likely to make the work more meaningful for the worker and

improve the feeling that the challenges at work match the capacities of the worker (Tims, Derks and Bakker, 2016).

Tims et al. (2013) found that employees who said that they actively did job crafting increased their job resources over time. This increase in resources led to increased wellbeing as well. Other positive correlations have been found between job crafting and job engagement (Zeijen, Peeters and Hakanen, 2018).

Person-job fit

Wellbeing studies have found multiple different fits that are closely linked with motivation and wellbeing of a worker. Person – job fit consists of two different parts. First is job demands matching a person's abilities, and second is a person's needs and preferences matching the supplies of the job (Tims, Derks and Bakker, 2016). When a person-job fit exists, the job is likely to be meaningful (Tims, Derks and Bakker, 2016).

Person-organisation fit

Person-organization fit is also a factor that affects the wellbeing of the workers (O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell, 1991). O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) say that "Person-organization fit is a significant predictor of normative commitment, job satisfaction, and intentions to leave, independent of age, gender, and tenure". Person-organization fit consist of worker's values and personality matching on the values and practices of the organization. Person-organisation fit is good if the worker is valued by the things he or she naturally represents and qualities that he or she possess.

2.2.6. New challenges for wellbeing

The development of communication technology has made it much easier to keep working on work-related stuff after leaving the office (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007). All though this gives more flexibility to the workers and gives new possibilities to manage the demands from both work and home for some people this may cause problems in separating free time from work (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007). This quickly leads to problems in personal relationships. Some connections found in this field are that ambition at work is positively related to being more connected after hours. Being more connected after hours is also positively related to conflicts with one's spouse (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007).

Stress during workdays causes symptoms that can be detected by physical changes like elevated blood pressure, accelerated heart rate and even cortisol levels in the blood (Bakker *et al.*, 2013). Health problems can be avoided if these stress symptoms disappear entirely during the resting period before the next working shift begins (Meijman and Mulder, 1998; Bakker *et al.*, 2013). For getting proper rest between workdays, the efforts outside working hours should be made on different systems than those that have been activated at work (Bakker *et al.*, 2013). For an office worker who gets mental strain at work, a physical exercise supports the recovery as it is demanding for the body but mentally relaxed. Working in the evening, however, is likely to increase the need for recovery even more (Bakker *et al.*, 2013). The situation in Finland in 2013 can be seen in Figure 3.

2.3. Self-management influences wellbeing

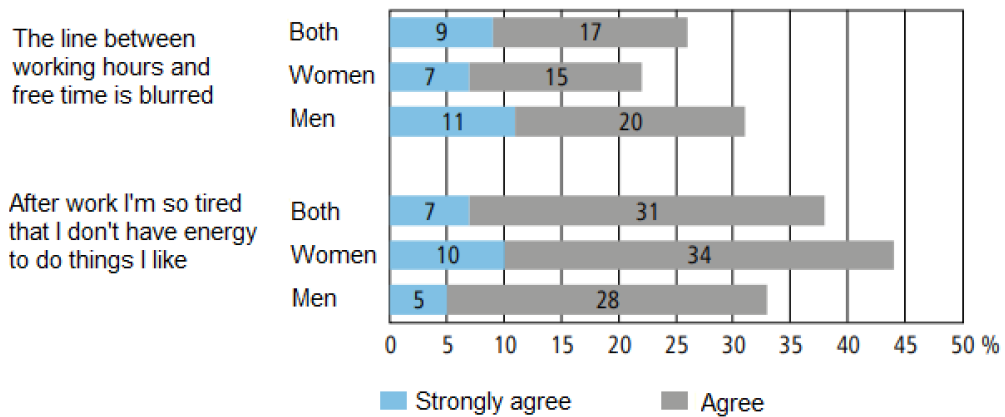


Figure 3, *Blurring the line between working hours and free time in Finland in 2013*

(Sutela and Lehto, 2014)

In self-managing organizations where worker's time and actions are not monitored or regulated the worker themselves must handle the issue. They are responsible on making sure that they are accessible enough so that the worker does not harm the work of the organization or the customer too much, but the worker is also responsible of that they get enough rest to maintain the wellbeing of themselves and their families.

2.3. Self-management influences wellbeing

As it seems that there is no research that would combine wellbeing and self-managing organisations, incite for this thesis has been gathered separately from both topics. The self-management literature that I have used in this thesis focus heavily on self-managing organisation, not just self-managing teams as the absence of hierarchical management affect significantly to the values and habits of the organisation. The wellbeing literature used in this thesis combines some of the most used theories from the past 40 years. This theme combining section relies mostly on my interpretation on how the characteristics from both

themes affect each other and on some real-life situations described on Laloux's *Reinventing organisations* (2014) and in Martela and Jarenko's *Itseohjautuvuus* (2017).

Although self-managing teams have been studied a lot more than self-managing organisations, this research is mainly based on the research done on self-managing organisations. In organisations that use self-managing teams, the structures and decision-making habits are still based on the hierarchical structures, and many employees have supervisors, so the wellbeing related issues are not comparable to self-managing organisations. The preunderstanding about things that influence workers wellbeing is mainly based on the quantitative studies made in the past four decades.

The first and most evident issue in combining these two themes is that in traditional organisations, supervisors have a significant impact on the wellbeing of their subordinates. This can be seen in Figure 2, chapter 2.2.3. In self-managing organisations, there are no supervisors, and this responsibility mainly remains on the worker. Working without a supervisor also means that the worker is responsible for their job description and their actions define their responsibilities. This means that the workload and pressure is very much a result of the workers' skills and characters. A highly motivated or conscientious worker may quickly end up with a workload that is more than he or she can handle.

The workers should be able to control their tasks and workload so that the amount, responsibilities and energy levels would stay with an appropriate level. This also means that the worker needs to be able to modify their workload and to be able to decrease the workload if they face some personal challenges that reduce their capability to carry out work or deal with pressure.

This is also an issue in which workers in traditional organisations are used to receive support from their supervisor.

In self-managing organizations there usually are no strict rules or regulations about where, when, and how employees should do their work. Of course, this means that workers can adapt their working routines so that they match better with their personal needs and preferences. The workers must set the rules and habits that they work with by themselves. They are also themselves responsible that the content of the work is appropriate for their skill level and their interests. In addition to all this, the workers must control the amount of work and rest themselves. To reach to expectations of their own and others while making sure that they get enough rest and that work does not control their lives too much might be hard, especially for inexperienced workers.

Martela and Jarenko (2017) argue that changing megatrends will increase the amount of self-managing organisations during the coming years. The wellbeing of their workers will play an essential role in the success of the organisations and especially their workers. Savaspuro (2019) claims in her book that for Buurtzorg, self-management is a way to achieve happier workers and happier workers are the real key for the for success.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, I present how I conducted the study. First, the philosophical approach to the study is briefly described. There is also an introduction to the case companies and the interviewees that are studied in this thesis as well as to the analysis.

3.1. Research approach

The experienced wellbeing is a subjective concept. It only can be described through the conceptual terms people have created, and there is no measurable quantity. The level of wellbeing that people describe as good or satisfying is subjective and has changed during the generations, areas and nations. This study focusses on the perceived wellbeing of the workers in self-managing organisations. In this research, the main objective is to increase understanding of how people perceive their wellbeing and which factors they think are related to their wellbeing. This means that the medically measurable wellbeing of these interviewed people is not in the scope of this research. The workers in the organisation are the best experts about their personal relationship towards wellbeing, and I also predicted that they might have a good understanding of the reasons that influence their wellbeing.

As a person describes the feelings he or she has, the feeling has been taken as truth. The feelings have not been more deeply analysed but mainly categorised as positive or negative. The main focus has then been identifying the things that cause positive feelings, and on the other hand, negative feelings as these reasons have the most significant practical value and can be taken into account when a decision will be made in the future.

To get to know how these members of these organizations think about their wellbeing and the factors influencing the wellbeing, I needed to know the thoughts and stories of these workers. To get these thoughts and stories, I have conducted a semi-structured interview and asked them about their experiences. The semi-structured interviews were analysed with a qualitative method making this a qualitative study.

Interviewing as a data-gathering method will always give a subjective view of the situation (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009). Interviewing is not only collecting data but a method that creates data in the interaction of the interviewee and the interviewer. Apart from these two people, many external details are affecting the contents of the interview. The mood of both the interviewee and the interviewer are an essential factor as well as their energy levels and the possible previous relationship between the two people. The situation should always be as safe and comfortable for the interviewee as possible so that he or she does not have to think they should keep from revealing something they know.

Studying wellbeing drives me straight to hermeneutics issues. The concept of wellbeing has some medically detectable characteristics, but mainly it is about people's feelings and how they evaluate different things and issues. Wellbeing, as we understand, is there only because people have created such a phenomenon.

In this thesis, I concentrate on perceived wellbeing and people's feelings about wellbeing. Unlike those studies that try to measure the people's measurable wellbeing, I'm not measuring people's blood pressure or heart rate or having the interviewees fill in a question form. These feeling very much convert into medical states, but as I'm after those things that cause these feelings.

When interviewing people about their feelings, one needs to take a hermeneutic stand. Claiming anything requires making an interpretation about the things the interviewee has said (Laine, 2010). At this phase, the preliminary understanding that I have on the issue has a significant impact on my interpretation as a human being sharing the same cultural background as the interviewees I share many of those intersubjective values and conceptions as the interviewees (Laine, 2010). It is likely that many of the first interpretations are wrong. Therefore, I have maintained my mind as open as possible during the analysis and try to minimize the amount that my preliminary ideas about the issue, the interview situation or the interviewee would affect my interpretation. This iterative approach is called the hermeneutic circle, where the analysis is done in small steps, and the previous understanding always guides the next round of analysing (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009). This way, I tried to avoid jumping into the conclusion in the beginning and strengthening my already made conclusion during the later process.

Phenomenological view about people states that every person is an individual with their personal experiences, feelings and preferences (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009). However, every person is also part of some community that also affects to their desires and preferences (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009). So, every individual has their own unique view about their working community, but still, our Finnish culture has a great effect on how people view feel that community and its preferences and values.

In line with these phenomenological thoughts, I try to find out which things people feel are the most important for their wellbeing at work. As interpersonal values of the co-workers affect people's personal values and

preferences, one interesting question is how much the other people inside the work community changes the overall values and preferences the workers have on wellbeing issues.

In this study, my goal is not to create a comprehensive definition of what wellbeing is for workers at a self-managing organization but to find things that workers in self-managing organizations associate with their wellbeing. I'm not interested in claiming a rule or theory about how well being should be supported but finding ways how those separate things that people find meaningful can be supported.

3.2. Conducting the research

3.2.1. Pre-interview phase

Before the interviews, most of my readings had been about the self-managing organization. The target was to find out how self-managing organizations usually work, and which are the basic principles on which they are run. After reading Laloux's *Reinventing organisations* (2014), Martela and Jarenko's (2017) and a few articles, I had reached a comprehensive understanding of the area of self-managing organizations.

As it comes to wellbeing, there were not any pre-selected models of theories that I was meant to study. At this point, I had preliminary research questions, but it was clear that these questions were still going to change to match better the issues that the interviewees claimed as the most important factors about their personal wellbeing.

After I had interviewed the ten employees at the first company, I had a couple of weeks to deepen my knowledge about some of the issues that had been most talked about during the first interviews. Job crafting was the most significant new concept at this point.

During the interviews at the second company, I was able to focus on the similarities and differences between these two companies. After finishing the interviews, the research questions were updated to nearly final forms, and the reading about wellbeing continued.

3.2.2. Interviews and case companies

All interviews in this thesis are conducted as a part of the Mode-research. The research is done by over ten people from three different organisations: Aalto University, University of Tampere and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The same interview themes are used in all Mode-research interviews done in all seven organisations so that all interviews can be used as a source for studying other topics about self-management. The research is funded by Business Finland. Under each theme, there were some example questions to help to lead the interview to the wanted direction if needed.

The interviews were held in private rooms with only the interviewer and interviewee present and the process which secures the confidentiality of conversations have been discussed with the interviewees. At the first company, there was a second interviewee doing more interviews for the Mode research, but this thesis is based only to those ten interviews that I conducted myself. At the beginning of every interview, it was mentioned that the interest was in the interviewees' personal opinions and thoughts and not the official

views of the company. The interviewees were informed that anything they said during the interview could not be linked to them personally and could not cause them any consequences after the interview. With these arrangements, I've created a set-up where I can be relatively sure that the opinions the interviewees describe can be considered as reliable statements of their actual thinking.

My 20 interviews were done in two different companies, ten interviews in each one. The average length of an interview was a bit over an hour in which the part focusing on wellbeing was usually between 15 and 20 minutes. Though, wellbeing related issues were also handled in the other parts of the interviews.

The first company is a Finland based ICT service company that has a few hundred employees in multiple offices. They have been self-managing for all the way from the beginning, and both values and the way of working are grown around the principles of self-management. The ten interviewees were volunteers among the company, but the other interviewer and I did some guiding so that the interviewees would represent the whole organization. Later, on this thesis, this company referred to as company Early Bird.

The second company is a Finland based product company, selling on going digital services to businesses. Currently, the company has around 50 employees, mainly in one office. They have taken up self-management much later, just a few years ago, and been fighting through the change. During the last year, they have managed to find some suitable ways of working and the overall feeling about self-management seemed to be quite positive among the workers. In this company, I got to select all the interviewees. First, I selected the number of workers that I wanted from each team, and after that, I selected the people semi-randomly so that both genders and people with shorter and longer history within the company would all be represented. I contacted 12

people, of which one did not want to attend to the study, one could not fit the interview to his calendar and ten were interviewed. This company is later referred to as the company Late Bloomer.

Table 2, People interviewed

	Early Bird	Late Bloomer	Total
People interviewed	10	10	20
Men interviewed	9	5	14
Women interviewed	1	5	6
Average working experience (years)	12	16	14
Average years in the company	4,7	7,1	5,9

As we can see from Table 2, the workers at the company Late Bloomer were a bit more experienced both in the total work experience and in their current company. In the company Late Bloomer, I interviewed five men and five, which well represents the real ratio in the company is 44 per cent women. However, at the company Early Bird, the gender ratio is distorted as the other interviewer preferred interviewing women. The company Early Bird has more men than women, but the ratio is much more even than the one woman to nine men indicates.

To better understand the current situation and state of self-management in the case companies, I used a figure used by Lee and Edmondson (2017). References Valve, Morning Star, Zappos and Managerial hierarchy are made by Lee and Edmondson (2017).

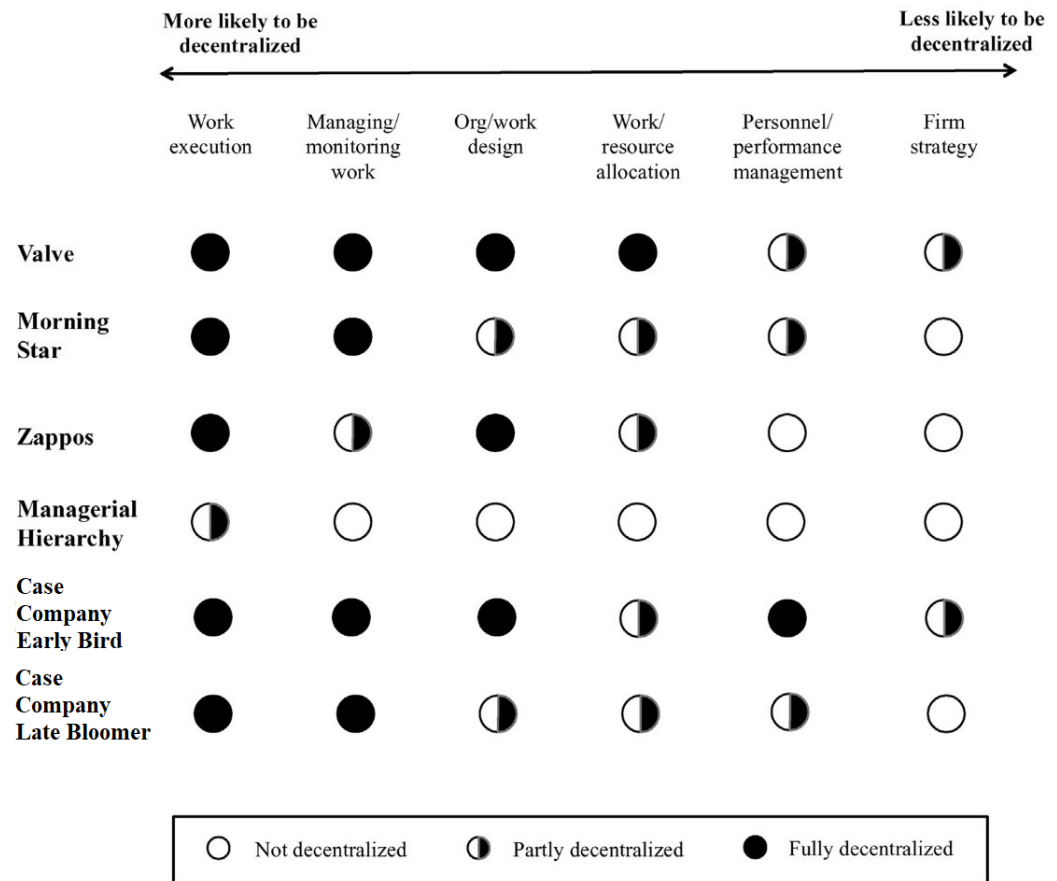


Figure 4, State of Decentralization

The wellbeing related contents on the interview were not clear facts that interviewee could just state after the question was asked. Instead, many of the discussed issues were about feelings and matters that some of the interviewees had not thought before the interview. Many of the beliefs, understandings and opinions were created during the interview based on the conversation and the thoughts it raised. This also had a significant impact on the form of the statements of the interviewees. Many of them are long and meandering, and the entire view about the issue in hand can change during the single comment. This has a significant impact on the analysis part where interpretation about the

main point of comment had to be done, and the unnecessary parts cut off from the quotes to communicate the original message as clearly as possible.

3.2.3. Analysis

The transcripts of the interview recordings were done by a third-party company that has an ongoing agreement with Aalto University. After I received the transcripts, the analysis was done in three phases. First, I read through the transcripts of the interviews to remind myself about the contents of the interviews. After this, I conducted the central part of the analysis and divided the comments about wellbeing into 44 categories. Around half of these 44 categories were created before the categorising of the comments and the other half were created during the categorizing, based on the new understanding that the process generated. At the third phase, all the interviews were categorized into these 44 categories so that the same 44 categories were used for all interviews.

I grouped the 44 categories under 18 larger categories. From the 18 larger categories, I selected ten that were most related to the research questions. The seven subtitles in the findings chapter are composed of one or two of the selected larger categories.

4. Findings

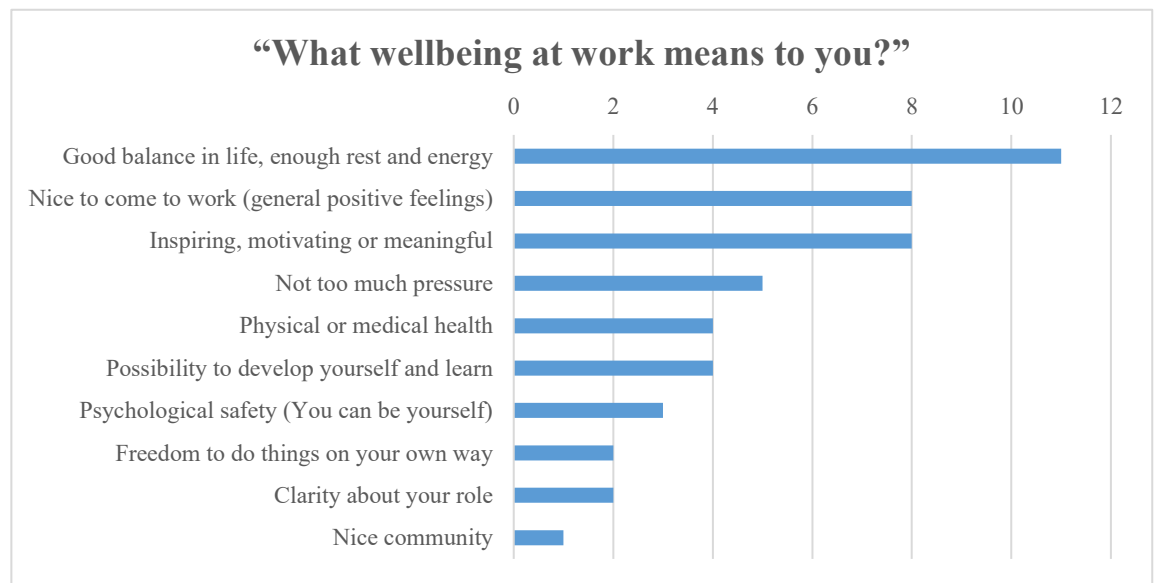
In this chapter, I present the main findings of wellbeing from the interviews. There are also quotes from the interviewees that support the findings I have made. The findings are divided into two main categories. First, at 4.2, I present how the characteristics of self-management affect the wellbeing of the workers. The second category presented in 0 shows how the very values and practices of these two case companies affect to the wellbeing of the workers in these two companies and how significant effect the habits and values of the company can have. The further drawn interpretations from these findings are discussed in chapter 5.

4.1. “What wellbeing at work means to you?”

During the interviews, every interviewee was asked what wellbeing at work meant for them personally. This perceived wellbeing focused a lot into mental things such as emotions about the work and that the work was not too consuming, also leaving time and energy for life outside work. The answers of the 20 interviewees are composed in Table 3. Some of the interviewees mentioned only one thing and others mentioned multiple things in their answer. In the diagram, one interviewee can be counted to a single category just once, but one interviewee can be in multiple categories.

4.1. “What wellbeing at work means to you?”

Table 3, What wellbeing means to you



From Table 3, we can see that over half of the interviewees mentioned that wellbeing at work means somehow general balance for them. They usually mentioned that something about work not consuming all their time and energy, but they can also enjoy a happy life outside work as well. The more senior members in both companies said that the companies' target all the way from the beginning has been to make sure that employees can run happy lives also outside the company. The answers two (Nice to go to work) and three (Inspiring, motivating and Meaningful) indicate that the employees in both companies feel that they want their work to be fun. Being healthy, being able to do one's job and getting paid is not enough for them.

As can be seen already from these answers, the concept of wellbeing is not something that one can quickly put into words. The interviewees answered everything from specific definitions to reasons behind wellbeing, consequences of wellbeing and feelings created by wellbeing. These answers

clearly reflect the same unclarity as the missing commonly agreed definition at the discussed at section 2.2.1.

At Table 4, the original categories have been further divided into four thinking. It shows that for nearly all some balance between work demands and resources are at the top of their mind when they think about wellbeing at work. Nearly half also mention something about they feel about the work itself as the work being motivating, meaningful, inspiriting, or they get to develop themselves while working. Some also mentioned something about the community or communication. Eight of the respondents also mentioned how the combination of the reasons makes them feel to describe the situation as a whole.

Table 4, Wellbeing in categories

Own thinking about the work (9/20)

Motivating
Meaningful
Inspiring
Developing/learning

Demands - Resources (16/20)

Not too much stress
Not too much pressure
Good energy levels
Good balance between work and other life / enough rest
Something physical (pain from work etc.)
Something medical (being healthy)
Freedom to do things on your own way
Coping

Communication with others (4)

Psychological safety
Nice community
Being human, not a resource (You can be yourself)
Clarity about your role

Combination of all (8)

Nice to come to work
Positive feelings about work

For many workers who prefer autonomous work, the best thing in self-management and also an important thing for their wellbeing is that they are not micromanaged, and they are allowed to determine their working habits on their own. Many of them seemed to enjoy working from home.

Quote 1:

It (wellbeing at work) probably means quite a lot of what I have said before: Being able to come and go as I want and do the work in peace. I am most efficient when I can work in peace.

Humanity, human connection and being related as a human not as a resource were also factors that were mentioned multiple times. This seemed to be connected to the feeling of being appreciated, but people also indicated that it allowed to such human behaviour as mistakes, having bad days and such.

Quote 2:

It (wellbeing at work) means... a certain kind of psychological security, that is ... that I understand what kind of environment I work in, and I'm with people who care about me as a human being, not just as a kind of producer of work, I'm not a kind of production unit here, but I am the person who is worked with, and that produces the results. It improves my wellbeing that I'm able to do meaningful projects with nice smart people.

The coherence, when talking about wellbeing during my twenty interviews, was noticeable. There was not a single interviewee who would have somehow indicate that wellbeing would not be an important issue for them. The workers also had a congruent view about the wellbeing related things that their company was succeeding in, and which were the ones they still needed to improve with. Of course, there was variation between the interviewees, but no real disagreement could not be found. Especially the workers at company Late Bloomer understood that they are not at equal positions with each other and

others were more satisfied than others. Still, their view about how things at their organisation should be was very similar to each other.

Even if the two case companies had many differences in their characteristics, the issues according to wellbeing related issues were surprisingly congruent. That the one is a product company and the other project-based consultancy company or that the other had almost ten times the number of workers compared to the other did not seem to create any significant differences. The reason that created maybe most wellbeing related differences was that the company Late Bloomer had followed self-management only for a few years as the company Early Bird had developed their practices already from the beginning. Some treats for wellbeing were clearly formed because the change to self-management is not easy for the workers who should give up old habits or because of beginning self-management.

4.2. Self-management affecting the wellbeing of the workers

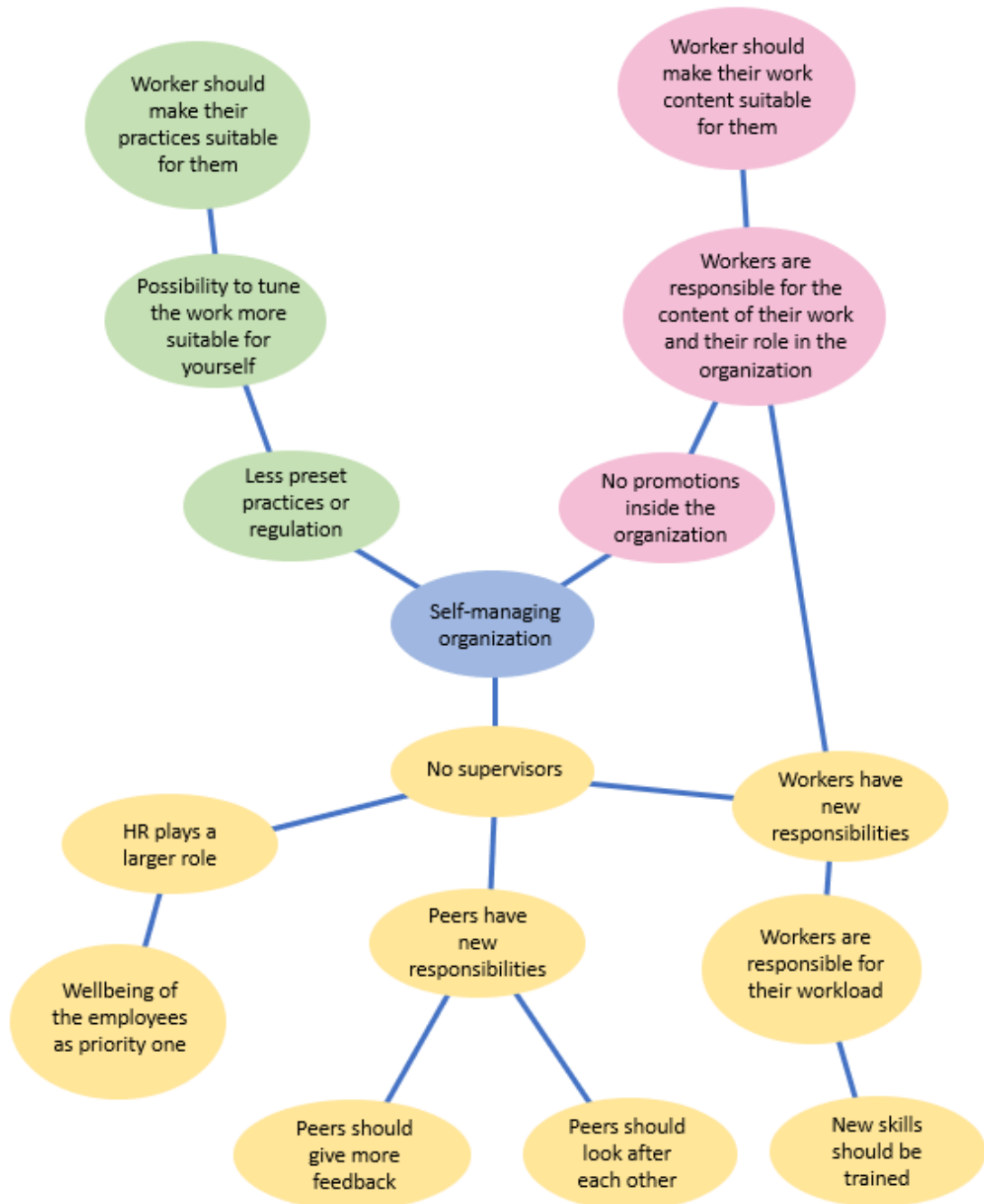


Figure 5, Characteristics of self-management affecting the wellbeing

Figure 5 is a summary of the themes and concepts discussed in section 4.2. The lines between ovals do not represent that the other would cause the other but

only that the interviews indicate that there is a linkage between the two concepts. All the contents in the figure are based on the following section, and no additional content is included.

4.2.1. Role of HR

In both case companies, many traditional supervisor actions are left for HR personnel. They handle hiring, and salary negotiations and they seem to be the first go-to place for many employees if they faced any conflicts or personal problems. In both companies, HR was given a lot of credit from the workers, and the workers felt that they got much support from the HR personnel whenever needed. Still, the most significant finding of the HR was not about the actions they made, but the outstandingly positive image people had of the HR. It was nothing like the stereotypic bureaucratic HR department which many of the interviewees also compared their HR-team to. The employees also felt that HR was in the company to make sure that everything was good for the employees and not just for the company.

Quote 3:

...it feels like genuine caring. All the way from HR-team, at least I really feel that HR is for people not for the company. Of course, it's also for the company, but generally, in corporations, HR is there for the company's benefits, not to support the workers.

The message from HR-personnel was very similar in both case companies. In company Early Bird, many of the goals had already been reached, but the vision of which kind of company they wanted was also similar in company

Late Bloomer. One of the members at the company Early Bird's HR-team told the same thing from the HR-team's perspective.

Quote 4:

The main responsibility is, in a way, to know how our people are doing. That is clearly our main objective.

The HR-personnel in both companies used some necessary tools to stay in track of the workers. These tools included voluntary regular questionnaires and meetings, but to stay on track of the workers, HR must be made as approachable as possible. In company Late Bloomer, they used a yellow chair in the HR-room to make it easier for employees to tell about their problems and admit they had something they needed help with. Such physical object makes the message from the HR to the workers even more concrete. These efforts also seemed to be working as multiple interviewees said that is the place they go with their problems.

Quote 5:

I think if I had more to worry about, then maybe I would go talk to HR. They have a yellow chair in their room that you can go to open up and tell them about your worries.

In the company Early Bird, the HR-team is also responsible for the on-boarding of new employees. One interviewee described the on-boarding to be really thorough, which she taught was very important as the company is based on people knowing the standard practices.

Quote 6:

I have not experienced this kind of on-boarding in my life

4.2.2. Not having a supervisor

One thing that easily comes with self-management is certain unclarity with many practices as people are allowed to determine their way of working. Without a supervisor to turn into, there are many issues that the worker must solve by him or herself. Too unclear practices or facing too many unclear situations on a daily basis may cause stress.

Quote 7:

Well, the ambiguity that inevitably comes from not having such tight structures, it is the kind that if it gets out of control, it can threaten (wellbeing).

For a worker in a traditional organization, the supervisor is usually the person that gives most of the feedback for the worker. Working without a supervisor, many of the interviewees felt that they did not get as much feedback as they would have wanted.

Quote 8:

Well, maybe getting that feedback is one downside, you don't get much.

Quote 9:

We have no one who would have the manager's responsibility to intervene in such conflict situations. Of course, that is something that should be handled somehow, and the responsibility lies with the people's own desire for intervention and taking action.

As there is no supervisor to give feedback, the responsibility remains with the peers. In such a flat organization where there are no promotions, learning and growing were mentioned as essential goals in many interviewees work. For learning and growing feedback plays a very significant role. In both companies, there were some facilitated conversations to set goals and to talk about things one could develop in. Some feedback would still be better to be given straight after the situation and not months after. Especially giving critical feedback seemed to be difficult for many of the interviewees, although many understood how important it would be for development and wanted critical feedback from their peers.

Quote 10:

There were certain things that left me bothering, but I don't feel it's right now to somehow talk about it ... that we're bad at giving feedback. I would argue that in that sense, we avoid conflicts.

In traditional hierarchical companies' supervisors usually have the responsibility to monitor the wellbeing of their subordinates. As HR cannot closely follow each employee, in the case companies, the colleagues were encouraged to monitor the wellbeing of their peers and take action if they see that someone is exhausted.

Quote 11:

of course, colleagues are encouraged to look a little behind each other. If it seems like someone is not ok... you should talk to the colleague about it or talk to HR about it, and then we can get help and care for them.

However, many employees feel that it is not easy to notice these symptoms of fatigue or burnout in one's peers.

Quote 12:

But recognizing it may be challenging

Even if the employee is able to recognise the symptoms in another employee, there might be certain things that make it challenging to take action. For example, seniority is one thing that can cause such problems.

Quote 13:

if there is someone who has by far the most seniority in the team, then it can be challenging for others to ask him or her if his or her wellbeing at work is currently at the level he or she would like it to be or so on.

Even though many of the issues mentioned, about not having a supervisor, could be seen as harmful, none of the interviewees said that they would like to have a supervisor. In the other hand, many of the interviewees seemed to enjoy the freedom they had. Not having a supervisor leaves workers and teams to decide their working methods and on their own. For these motivated and skilful workers being able to select the most suitable methods, practices,

places and times to work seemed to be very important and they described it as an essential thing supporting their wellbeing.

Quote 14:

no one is watching me; I'm trusted that I make my working day what I find sensible ... if I check that I have no meetings today and I have the feeling that I want to work from home today I will work from home that day and not I'm not going to announce that I'm working from home today

4.2.3. Affecting the content of one's job

During the interviews, this theme of changing, tuning or twisting one's job content was mentioned in almost every interview. Some workers felt that they could easily change their tasks or even the full title of their work if they wanted as others felt that they were a lot more stuck with their current job and tasks. As there are so supervisors to modify the job content for their subordinates, everyone is much more responsible for their job and what is part of it. One interviewee describes as following:

Quote 15:

I've heard that some people here think that others are served nice tasks on a tray, but it really isn't like that. How I see it is that no one brings you interesting stuff, but you need to be active yourself. That is the prerequisite for being happy with your job, that you are active and not just wait that something is brought to you.

Some workers seemed to be much more capable of affecting their own job content than others. One's ability to affect the work tasks and job content also seemed to be connected to the over job satisfaction of the worker.

Even though there would be a willingness to offer these changes in job content, two main barriers were mentioned in both companies. First, the skill set of the worker might be very narrow so that he or she might be at a suitable level only in that one role they currently possess. The second barrier is that there too many people wanting to do the tasks that a person wants to change to and too few people wanting to do the tasks the worker wants to change from.

Quote 16:

Even if somebody wants a change, that they want to do a little something else, it often fails. For example, you have been hired in one role at a company, and you want to change it quite moderately, ... that exchange now fails that you just have to go back to that, you should now do what you've been hired to do here, so it sort of breaks may be some sort of promise that you can do anything, so it has become, I know at least the couple cases that it has become troublesome. And it doesn't directly promote wellbeing, and then that's how people have ended up leaving the company,

The need for job crafting is recognized, but the practises that would make job crafting and changing roles possible for everyone do not seem to exist. Many of the interviewees found this problem that the workers are not this way equal position with each other.

Quote 17:

We talk a lot about being able to develop oneself and their job content very much and evolve here. As there isn't the traditional way, that you can develop your career in a way, that you would be promoted to a managerial position and blah, blah, blah, so we can develop a little differently than you can evolve in your work tasks or by modifying or changing them, but I don't really know that if you wanted to modify them more, then how it works in practice.

It seems that the idea behind letting people change their jobs is that no one would be stuck with their current position and job content. However, if this change is not possible for all of the workers, the impact on morale may be unwanted.

4.3. Case companies supporting wellbeing

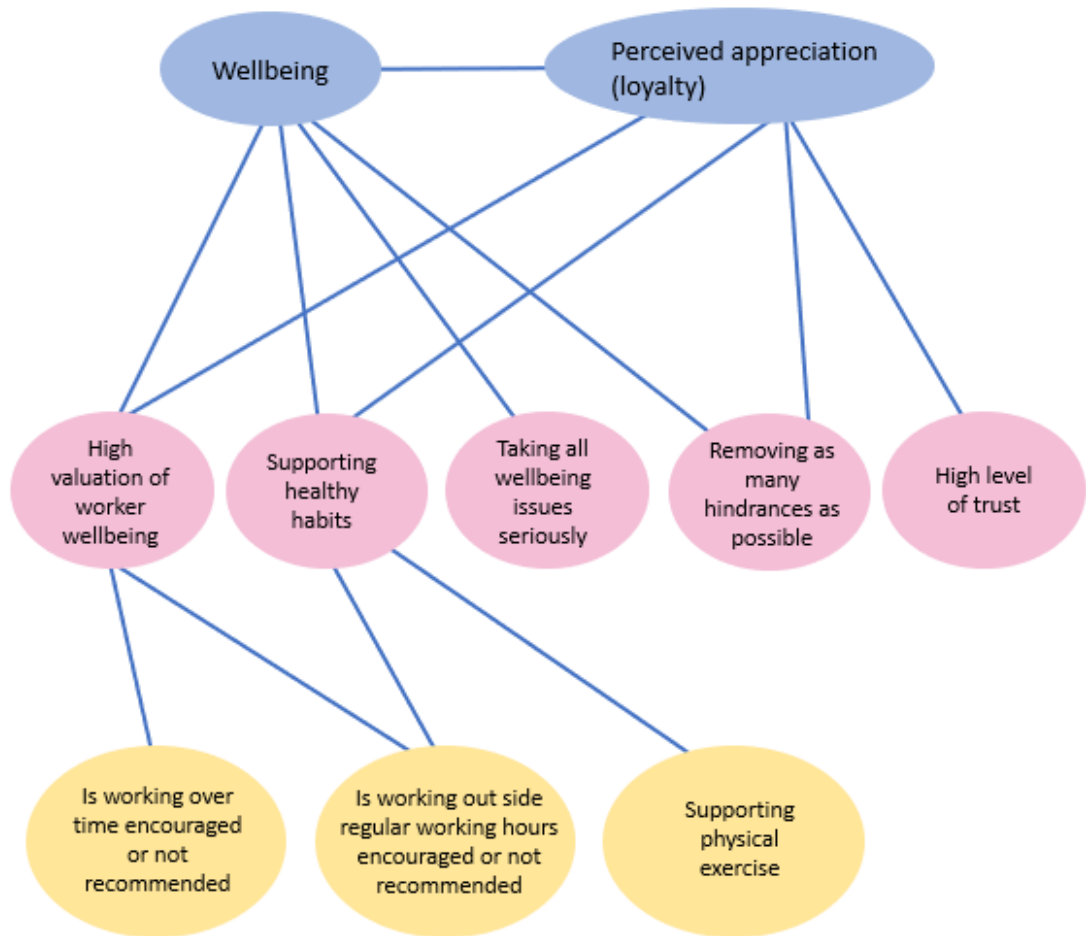


Figure 6, Company supporting wellbeing

Figure 6 is a summary of the themes and concepts discussed in section 0. The lines between ovals do not represent that the other would cause the other but only that the interviews indicate that there is a linkage between the two concepts. All the contents in the figure are based on the following section, and no additional content is included.

4.3.1. Perceived appreciation

Both case companies provided many different resources for their employees to support their wellbeing. Both companies have much larger healthcare packages for their employees than is legally required, and that was mentioned in 10/20 interviews without explicitly asking about healthcare.

It seems to be closely linked to perceived support. People enjoy knowing that they are taken care of and that their employer is not trying to cut costs when it comes to their wellbeing. At least most of the employees in both companies have a salary clearly over the Finnish average income so that the healthcare package provided by the employer does not make a significant difference in which healthcare services the workers can afford and which they cannot.

Quote 18:

I think it is so great that it (wellbeing) has been invested in it. So that I don't have anything to worry. And if I have any need whatsoever, it will work out. The certainty for it, it's pretty precious.

This same attitude was recognizable also with other resources that the companies provided for the wellbeing of the workers. It seemed that knowing that the company really appreciates the working conditions of the workers were nearly as crucial for the workers than the actual resources that the company provided. For example, in the company Late Bloomer, many employees said that it was great that they can use two hours of their working time for physical exercise each week even though many also said that they do not use the opportunity. Nevertheless, not using the given benefit did not take

away to perceived appreciation. So clearly, this benefit had a more significant impact than just physical exercise.

Quote 19:

We have a gym downstairs, and two hours a week everyone has the opportunity to work out during working hours. Go to the gym, jogging or whatever.

Quote 20:

I guess I could say that (wellbeing is supported) very well, I don't know how many companies have a structure like this. I, unfortunately, don't use, but it's not my way, I can't exercise like that. We have the opportunity to exercise twice a week during working hours. We also have sports vouchers and wellbeing at work is heavily supported also in other ways. There are good occupational health services, and so on. I think we are doing really well here.

The two hours of physical exercise in the company Late Bloomer were not the only example of worker benefits mentioned the interviews. The same attitude about thinking the wellbeing of the employees is a proper reason to use money was visible in both companies.

Quote 21:

the basics that should be in every company... here they are clearly done as if they were for yourselves. It appears in everything, here they are like that people have been thinking that well, how I would like this in a perfect world, what kind of benefits I would like

In the interview, also trust was linked to this same issue as perceived support. In general, it seemed that in both of the companies, the employees felt that they are highly appreciated and trusted.

Quote 22:

it shows, for example, in the trust. So that anyone's activities are not monitored. And it is understood that if I'm off today, I have a reason for it. My work won't go away; I'll take care of it anyway — no need to whine about it. Then, of course, the pay is decent, the tools are in order, the well-being of the people at work is being taken care of and all that little fun: coffee, soft drinks, massage chair. After all, all these tell about appreciation in a certain way.

4.3.2. Taking all wellbeing issues seriously

Taking seriously all wellbeing issues seemed to be another essential thing for the employees to know. This was described very positively by employees that had had some issues about their wellbeing as well by employees who had not. The employees knew that telling about issues with their wellbeing would not lead to negative consequences for them, and it would not be counted as their fault. Not only this affected clearly to know that the employees were cared about but also it affected the culture and attitudes about bullying and other misbehaviour toward colleagues. Any actions that jeopardize the wellbeing of another worker were strictly forbidden.

Quote 23:

I feel like if I can put my own problem into words, I will get such amazing help. And I totally have the feeling that I'm not alone with the problem as long as I mention it. ... That yes, I do feel that as long as I can mention that problem, then I will get help with it, completely.

This certainty of getting help and not to be blamed seemed to increase the psychological safety also among those employees who had not faced any problems. Many companies talk a lot about how important the workers are for them, but the actions require to be aligned with the talk. These proven actions were essential for the workers that showed that the company would act when needed made all the difference.

Quote 24:

Well, yes, I was positively surprised when I had more difficult things at home, how it was handled. I was prepared to take unpaid leave to take care of all that, but in the end, I didn't have to take unpaid leave at all. Working hours were reduced as much as needed. Or technically I got sick leave myself to handle those things. Even though that wellbeing issue wasn't really about me, it was about the family, but it was just so wonderful

Especially for Finnish people, it might be challenging to admit that they need help with mental things or that they are stressed out. In both of these companies, the culture supports attending in supportive activities, training or searching for help.

Quote 25:

Yeah, yeah. You are almost admired for telling that you have been attended some supporting activity.

4.3.3. The high valuation of the worker wellbeing

There was a strong succession for limiting working hours in the company Early Bird.

Quote 26:

Well, maybe the general work-life balance is that (what wellbeing means to me). So, that it's balanced, that life is not just about work, and the working hours are reasonable. And here for an example, the working time is 37.5 hours, and if it starts to go over, I've understood that the HR-team starts to ask whether there is something in this situation.

In addition to counting the hours, there was strong value-based support for not working overtime. I got the feeling that this culture for appreciating free time with friends and family not just personally but as a shared value throughout the company was maybe even more critical factor in limiting the working hours than the HR.

Quote 27:

Maybe the coolest thing about Early Bird is that nobody thinks it's cool to work long hours

One of the newcomers in Early Bird put it as follows:

Quote 28:

There are no meetings in any inhumane hours, and the norm is working 7.5 hours ... it's hard for me to understand how people really value leisure time here as much as working time, wow

One senior interviewee also made it clear during the interview that he has realized that most of their projects are not crucial enough that it would be worth sacrificing life outside work for the projects. This was a shared opinion among the more senior workers in the company Early Bird.

Quote 29:

Maybe if we were doing some software that would save someone's life, then we would do it (to work overtime), but not if the case is that someone can't make a phone call. So, fucking what?

The wellbeing of the workers was one of the primary goals of the company as well as standard financial goals.

Quote 30:

here is the right kind of balance where I feel that the environment supports my wellbeing, not only that I'm just productive

As the workers were asked what wellbeing at work meant for them, 11/20 said that limiting the amount of work so that they can get enough rest and also enjoy life outside work was part of what wellbeing at work meant for them.

In Late Bloomer, as it is a product company and they do not sell hours the working hours were not followed as systematically as in Early Bird. However, multiple interviewees mentioned some ways they use to follow and to limit their working hours or to ensure that they would not work in their free time. However, there is a significant difference between the two companies in how workers think about working overtime. I'm not sure if it had something to do with the other company working for customers and the other working for their projects, but in the company Late Bloomer, working overtime was seen as a justified action as long as the worker could compensate the extra worked hours after the more intensive month or two had passed. In the company Early Bird, the attitude was more like that the client never stops coming up with important matters, so trying to fix them by working extra hours will not fix anything.

The need for getting enough rest was noticed in both companies. At the company, Early Bird full holidays were given to all employees as they think rest is a necessity, not a benefit that can be limited only to employees who have been in the company for a specific time.

Quote 31:

Everyone who is hired always gets a full summer vacation right from the start so that they can get to the normal holiday cycle as it is recognized that those holidays are needed.

Not taking too much responsibilities or tasks as one's responsibility is also a significant matter of skills and personality. In self-managing organisations, the employee must balance between his or her level of contribution, energy levels

and wellbeing as there is no supervisor to set the proper amount of work for them.

Quote 32:

Certainly, there are (people who work too much), and it is that conscience that diligence is built-in things. I guess everyone, that when it is self-managed, should know their limits and be able to say no. And to hold on it. No one else can really do it for you. But yeah, I know there have been fatigue and ...

One of the more senior members at Late Bloomer analysed the troublesome issue:

Quote 33:

The culture and what would be the target state are probably different. ... That is a very Lutheran morality, and it is not good before long because you do a lot of unnecessary things where you burn yourself for nothing. This is a really difficult thing, and we are not good enough at it, and I said that our culture partly directs it and people partly want it too, but at the same time they realize that this is not good.

In company Early Bird, the culture guided stronger these actions. For modifying the culture towards the wanted state, it is essential that the most senior members who are most looked up to follow carefully the actions aligned with the wanted culture. Without the actual actions, the real culture and desirable will never match. In this matter, the continuous long-term work at company Early Bird had achieved phenomenal results.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the significance of the findings. Section 4.2 is mainly about issues that are caused by the characteristics of self-management. Section 0 is about other means that the case companies used to improve the wellbeing of their members. In the second half of this chapter, I also give some practical implications, limitations of this study and some ideas for future research.

5.1. Self-management influencing wellbeing in case companies

The findings indicate that the tasks that generally belong to the supervisor and provide the necessary resources to the employee had been successfully divided for different people among the organization. Mainly these tasks are done by HR, the person themselves or their colleagues. The significance of HR can be seen in quote 5. Still, every worker, especially those who are new in the organisation, should have some people to turn into if they face a problem that they feel they cannot answer by themselves. This person could be a mentor or just another member of the team. As the model of healthy work presented at section 2.2.2 show, these resources must be somehow provided for every worker. These findings give new confirmation that the resources can be provided without a supervisor. However, the findings also indicate that some workers, at least those who have just joined the organisation, would benefit if the person would be more clearly determined. Getting or lacking such support will likely affect the perceived support that the worker experiences. The perceived support theory is presented in section 2.2.5.

Because there were no supervisors in the organizations, workers were given more trust and responsibilities. However, none of the interviewees was

bothered by this. Some of the workers, however, thought that they would want more feedback from their peers and that it might be challenging to intervene wellbeing problems of some of their colleagues (Quote 8). Lacking proper feedback is a potential source of stress, as listed in section 2.2.3. The findings indicate that encouraging people to give feedback and rewarding people for such actions would increase the tendency to such actions.

None of the interviewees said that they would want a supervisor, and they all seemed to enjoy to freedom that self-management gave for them (Quote 1). It is also clear that a certain type of courage is needed from the workers in a self-managing organisation so that they are not too shy to fulfil those responsibilities they have given toward their colleagues (Quotes 9, 10 and 13). During the interviews, different people with different backgrounds described the issue with their own emphasis and variations. From these differences, I managed to draw the following conclusions: 1) One's personality has an affection for it. 2) One's previous history as a worker in a hierarchical or in a self-managing organisation or as an entrepreneur greatly affects how one see one's limits. 3) The culture among the organisation can promote or reduce the willingness to step up. From the company's perspective, the first two are mainly things that should be understood in hiring situations. The third, however, affect significantly to the possibility of success in self-managing organisations. These three things are closely linked to person-organisation fit presented at section 2.2.5.

In a traditional organisation, a worker's wellbeing is determined a lot by the skills, personality and workload of their supervisor as can be seen from Table 1 in section 2.2.3. In the case companies the workers have multiple people providing the same resources, which makes their situation a lot more equal compared to each other. The differences between supervisors in different

teams do not put the workers in unequal positions between each other. In general, the findings indicate that in self-managing organisations, the wellbeing of a worker is much more a result of their actions and less determined by external factors.

Although workers in both case organisations lacked the resource of a supporting supervisor, there was enough replacing resources in both companies. The most important ones are the support of HR and the peers as well as the training that are meant to increase the personal resources of the worker that play a very significant role. Also, resources such as health care, possibilities to physical exercise (Quotes 19 and 20) were present in both companies. Even if there are many resources in self-managing organisations, the most significant difference between a self-managing and a traditional company is that in a self-managing company, the final responsibility is always on the worker. They must identify and fix the problems with their wellbeing is on themselves. The worker needs to realize their problems or their risk behaviour first by himself or herself ask for the needed resource help with the problem. Therefore, all workers at self-managing companies should have at least some wellbeing related knowledge and skills. The second important factor is the culture that supports and encourages to inform one's personal problems and issues as soon as one has noticed any possible threats in themselves (Quote 25). An outstanding culture also encourages people to regular self-examination to notice such changes or states even earlier.

Compared to the nine sources of stress in traditional organisations found by Faragher, Cooper and Cartwright (2004), many of the stress sources in the case companies are different.

1. Perception of your work	The workers on the case companies more control over their work than workers in traditional companies so they might be able to get rid off some tasks or aspects of their job that cause them stress. In the other hand, as they do have a supervisor, it might lead some workers to take more responsibility than workers that have a supervisor.
2. Work relationships	In traditional companies, the relationship with the supervisor is the most important for the workers' wellbeing. In the case companies, there are instead several more relationships between team members and peers.
3. Your job	In both case companies, the worker can affect his or her job content. Workers actively search for new types of tasks and roles. However, this is easier with some people than to others.
4. Overload	The responsibility of identifying and reacting to too heavy workloads is more on the worker. The worker also needs to understand when to use supporting resources or training.
5. Control	The workers have much control over their work. However, this might vary significantly between workers.

6. Job security	The personnel in the case companies is more aware of the overall state of the company they are working in.
7. Resources and communication	In traditional companies, this section is heavily influenced by the skills and practices of the supervisor. In a self-managing organisation, the responsibility is more divided between peers and HR personnel heavily focusing on the team members of the worker.
8. Work-life balance	As no one else is tracking our working routines, the responsibility of combining work with life outside work is more on the worker themselves. For skilful workers, the wider freedom at work also makes it possible to better avoid conflicts between work and personal life.
9. Pay and benefits	No difference found from traditional companies

Kalimo *et al.* (2003) found out the differences in job resources and characteristics between those workers that had serious burnout symptoms and those who had not burnout symptoms at all. For those who had serious burnout symptoms, the resources that had decreased the most were: support from supervisor, co-operation, autonomy, organizational climate and sense of coherence. In self-managing organizations, these resources appear a bit

differently, but all to these findings match very well with the negative issues found in the interviews. Instead of a supervisor, the support must be available from the other team members and from HR as the interviewees described. The sense of coherence was interestingly decreased among those workers who had serious burnout symptoms and increased among those who had not burnout symptoms at all. Sense of coherence and clarity about one's role also seemed to be one of the most significant factors of wellbeing among the interviewees. In self-managing organizations where the level of coherence is typically lower these issues about one's need for coherence have an even more critical role than in traditional organization.

Already in the 1930s have found workers were more unhappy with monotonous tasks than workers with more different tasks (Mäkikangas, Feldt and Kinnunen, 2008). In the case companies where there is no possibility to get a promotion in it is crucial to be able to change the work in other ways to keep the task varying between each other but also developing during the time. The tasks can be reorganised among teams, but proactive actions where worker actively tries to modify their work more suitable for them are essential for worker wellbeing. The findings, like quote 15, highlight the significance of these proactive acts which are presented as job crafting in section 2.2.5. Getting rid of the tasks he or she finds annoying, dull, too stressful or some other not welcome and replacing them with tasks that are more suitable or just new and interesting are important for the experience of the work to stay positive year after year. These changes in one's work are also likely to improve the person-job fit presented at section 2.2.5.

At least in the two case companies, the employees were highly motivated and committed to the common goals set for the company. In such companies, a

case was that an employee would use job crafting in a way that would harm the company does not seem so probable.

5.2. Case companies supporting wellbeing

In this section, I concentrate on more organisation specific wellbeing issues found in the case companies. The key ideas can be summarised: everyone needs work resources; unlimited freedom is only good for very few and by taking care of someone they care you back.

Tracking the working hours as they did at company Early Bird is an effective way to prevent workaholism. This can be seen in quote 26. Workaholism as a concept is presented at section 2.2.4. Working outside working hours should be very carefully evaluated as it might work well to some people, but for many, it causes more problems than benefits in the long run. These challenges have been proven in research that is presented in section 2.2.6. In company Late Bloomer, some worked outside regular working hours, but in company Early Bird the regular practices were against working overtime and working outside regular working hours working, and no one of the interviewees said that it would be part of their routines. The findings confirm that a worker needs to have exceptional skills in self-leadership, presented in section 2.1.3, to flourish without any external guidance of working routines (Quote 32). For most workers, the best long-term experiences had been achieved by following some commonly agreed working hours. In contrary to the models of healthy work presented in section 2.2.2 in which freedom or autonomy is mainly described as a resource the findings indicate that there is a limit after which increasing freedom is not beneficial. By guiding the workers actions with healthy shared practices makes it easier for the worker to accomplish his or

her tasks while taking care of him or her wellbeing. The amount of autonomy which a person can handle seems to be closely linked with the worker's self-leadership skills and personality.

As in self-managing organisations, the culture has an even more significant role in directing the behaviour of the workers the culture should carefully monitor. As presented in section 2.1.2, there are much less other guiding factors and so the shared practices and values play a much more important role in self-managing organisations. Affecting the culture is not easy, but with long term actions, it can be done at least to some scale but understanding the culture and its effects is already a great achievement. Recruiting people with a specific profile and values is one of the most basic ways to affect the culture.

A certain sense of coherence and clarity about one's role were mentioned already in the previous part as things that support wellbeing. An important issue is also to understand that people react very differently to a certain amount of incoherence and people must be treated differently. The findings indicate that some of the workers faced more uncertainty than they would have wanted as can be seen in quote 7. A good supervisor can work this out but also in a self-managing organisation if someone complains that they are uncertain of their role it should be discussed seriously, and the situation should be fixed by clarifying the role or by increasing the resources. Hiring people who can tolerate a high level of incoherence is also an effective way to handle this issue. This confirms that the findings Kalimo *et al.* (2003) made about the sense of coherence in traditional companies also applies in self-managing organisations. The findings by Kalimo *et al.* are presented in section 2.2.3.

As the theory about job hindrances claims to support the wellbeing of the workers, the hindrances should be decreased as much as possible (Bakker and

Demerouti, 2007). This also indicates the perceived appreciation towards the workers when lousy internet connection or broken tools are fixed as soon as possible, and the workers do not have to cope with unnecessary hindrances. Both case companies did an outstanding job in this area. The model about job hindrances can be found in section 2.2.2 the theory about perceived organisational support in section 2.2.5.

As a good supervisor tries to treat all his or her subordinates equally, so should the rules in self-managing organisations. In this study, to the ability of a worker to change or tweak his or her job content was the most significant found source for unequal treatment. This can be seen at quotes 16 and 17.

Sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 present many individual ways the case companies increased the wellbeing of their members. Here is a list of the most important methods: taking all threats to wellbeing seriously, supporting work-life balance, prevent working overtime, supporting physical exercise, highlighting that work rarely is a deadly serious matter, removing as many hindrances as possible and giving wellbeing supporting benefits to the workers. None of these ways is a surprise or unexpected finding, but the list can be used as a checklist for other organisations that try to improve the wellbeing of their members.

A self-managing organisation is built without supervisors monitoring the employees, which makes the employees' own willingness to do good for the company and seek for the company's benefit in all decisions. This increases the significance that the employee thinks good about the company. As the theory about perceived support claims, the image of the company consists of many different factors, but in the mind of the worker, these different factors combine into a single image. Perceived organisational support theory is presented in section 2.2.5. For making sure that this image is positive for the

worker, many different actions can be justified. All the actions presented in sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 were important in increasing the worker wellbeing, but while supporting the wellbeing, these actions also improved the perceived support of the workers. Many quotes also showed that if a worker did not use some supportive function and so the function did not support his or her wellbeing the function still affected to the perceived support the worker received from the company. Positive employer image plays an important part when a company tries to achieve those organisational promises presented in section 2.1.4. These loyal workers are likely to work harder and with higher motivation even without the manager's supervision. This makes it possible to organise successfully without managers. While benefitting the company, taking good care of the workers will naturally also benefit the wellbeing of the workers in the company. This care can be seen in quote 3.

The example set by the more senior team members and other co-workers seemed to have a severe impact on the other workers, especially in the newcomers. This was visible, for example, in the way workers answered questions about their working hours and working overtime. Younger members of the organisation followed the actions and way of thinking and copied them into their routines. This behaviour indicated that the changes in the actions in some workers today is likely to be also copied to new employees in the coming years. If this were true, appreciating one's wellbeing and taking good care of oneself would increase such actions in other workers not only in the present but even more significantly in the future. This would increasingly highlight the significance of creating a wellbeing supporting atmosphere early on as the practices and values would keep strengthening during the time.

5.3. Practical implications

In self-managing organisations, it is essential to treat employees well and try to do as much as possible for their wellbeing. It works both ways so well treated employees want the very best for their company. In self-managing organisations, the success of the organisation is profoundly reliable of the workers' will to do their best for the company.

The heavy responsibilities of the workers should be balanced with substantial resources as well. Needed skills should be trained for everyone and peers, and HR should give strong support to everyone. It is important to remember that the need for support varies a lot between people depending on their background, skills, personality and work content. No-one should feel that they are left without the support they need. Encouraging the workers to support, look after and give feedback to each other is likely to benefit both the company and the employees.

Even though there are no promotions in self-managing organisations, some variation should be ensured for everyone. Only a few people are happy with the same work content year after year. If one feels that they are stuck with their current work content, it significantly increases their tendency to leave the company.

Even is a self-managing company would have fewer rules and compulsory practices to guide the actions of the workers this still does not mean that there would not be ways to direct the actions, practices and values of the workers. As there are no official regulated ways to work it is both harder and more important to stay on track of the practices, values and way of thinking of the workers. When there is the right understanding about the current state and the ideal state of the practices, values and way of thinking they can be affected

for example by the talks and actions of the highly valued senior personnel of the company.

5.4. Limitations

All these results are derived from 20 interviews done in two Finnish organisations. The two organisations have been selected to this study by the Mode research group. The reasons behind these selections have not only been done to optimize only this research but all the studies at Mode.

At company Late Bloomer I had the possibility to select all the interviewees so that they give the best coverage of the whole organisation, but at the company Early Bird the interviewees were all volunteers who happened to be free for interviews at the particular dates. Although we were able to send our wishes and have some effect on the interviewees, the selection of interviewees was not optimal to reflect the whole organisation.

One clear challenge for this study was the list of interview themes set by the research group. So that the interviews could be used as a source for studying other matters of self-management the interview themes that every interview at Mode research was meant to follow was pre-set by the research group. This limited the time to be used to wellbeing related topics and questions. At least with wordy interviewees, the time for spontaneous follow-up questions was very limited. Because of this time pressure, there is a possibility that some of the interviewees would have had some exciting factors that remained untold.

One promising thing that indicates that not all the findings are only limited to these organisations is the significant similarities found at both companies. Although the other company is in consulting business and the other is a

product company there are multiple similarities between the companies. This sets a promising basis for the findings to be more universally applicable in self-managing organisations such conclusions cannot be drawn based on just two companies.

Like the literature review already indicated wellbeing is not a clear term, and there is variation in how people understand the term. This increases the amount of interpretation needed to conduct the research. All the interviews used in this study are done by one person only, and this same person has also done the analysis based on these interviews. Even though I have conducted the study as correctly as I can and followed the principles of the hermeneutic cycle my presumptions, preunderstanding and view about the issue in hand must have had some impact to the results. In this research that follows hermeneutic methods and studies on phenomenological issues, these biases and presumptions caused by the researcher are the most significant methodological limitation (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009). For reducing the possibility and impact of these biases and limitations, the research process and the findings have been supervised and evaluated by two academic supervisors. The findings have also been presented and discussed in one of the case companies, and the members of the organisation did not disagree with any of the main findings of this study.

At this study, the sayings of the interviewees have not been questioned. I assume that the workers have answered how they see the issues handled by their best understanding and in my understanding, they have had any reason not to do so. In this study, I have also assumed that the view interviewees had on the issue has been accurate, at least from their subjective point of view.

5.5. Future research

This study gives some ideas for future research. As this study only consists of 20 interviews and two organisations verifying these findings in a more extensive study would be the logical first step. Interviewing more people in the same organisations or interviewing people from other organisations would add the understanding about the results. Further research could also be done with a different method. By using a different method, the possible biases and flaws of this method would likely be found. With another method, it would also be possible to find out if the things that the affected to the perceived wellbeing of the workers according to this study have a similar effect to the actual wellbeing of the workers. Such longitudinal study would deepen the understanding greatly about the issues found in this research.

Another exciting thing to know will be if the same finding of perceived wellbeing is present in other counties or completely other industries. In this study to focus was on self-managing organisations but if these findings of perceived wellbeing only limit to self-managing organisations or do people share similar opinions also in other types of organisations, would need another study to be figured out.

Perceived support theory seems to have a much more significant role in my findings than it has at most of the studies handling wellbeing or need for monitoring and management. So, the question that remains unanswered is whether the perceived support has more significant meaning at my organisations or has the employees demand for perceived support grown significantly for some reason.

Actions of senior workers clearly guided the actions of younger workers in the organisation. It would be interesting to know if the changes in behaviour in

self-managing organisations create a self-reinforcing cycle where the actions of today would generate more and even stronger similar actions in the future. This would explain why the habits and practices of almost every worker at company Early Bird were so similar even though there were no official or written instructions to follow such routines. However, the ways this is done and the effects it has in the future remain unanswered and would need future research to be conducted.

5.6. Conclusion

The lack of supporting supervisor leaves the employee without a significant resource, but the case companies prove that the lack of supervisor can be replaced with other resources. Active HR and peers are in a crucial role in the replacing process. Even though there are no supervisors, every worker should have someone to turn into if they need help or if they feel that they do not understand their role or tasks.

In self-managing organisations, the level of autonomy is high, and the workers can usually set their own habits and practices on their own. Still, unlimited freedom is suitable only for few, and most workers benefit for some guidance. These practices, values, way of thinking should be closely observed because they can be affected in the long run with an example, encouragement and rewarding people of wanted behaviour. Newer members of the organisation copy the practices and way of talking from the more senior members and slowly, which slowly lead to change.

The case companies showed multiple ways to promote the wellbeing of their workers. Taking all threats seriously to wellbeing, supporting work-life

balance, prevent working overtime, supporting physical exercise, highlighting that work rarely is a deadly serious matter, removing as many hindrances as possible, properly onboarding new employees to decrease their insecurity and giving wellbeing supporting benefits to the workers are just some examples that were most highlighted by the interviewees. This list can be used as a checklist or for inspiration for other organisations that are trying to take good care of their members.

Personally, I was very surprised by how well the wellbeing related questions matched each other in both companies, although the companies were quite different. At the beginning of the research process, the idea was to compare the companies between the companies, but after the analysis phase was done, it was clear that there were not many things to compare.

By supporting the wellbeing of the workers, a company greatly affects the perceived support of the workers. Perceived support is closely connected to the employee's image of the employer. The image about the employer affects significantly to the motivation of the worker and the worker's willingness to do their best for the employer and to seek the employers best in the situations they face at their work. By taking good care of the workers, the company can greatly increase the workers willing to take good care of the company.

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7. Appendixes

7.1. APPENDIX I – Interview themes and example questions for managers

I used this list of example questions with three interviewees at company Late Bloomer. Those workers had been planning the change self-management.

Interview themes for managers

Background questions:

Job title and duties

How many years have you been in working life?

Moreover, in this company?

Orientation:

How has your day been so far?

Please tell what your tasks are?

Please tell the positives sides of this company. And the negative ones?

If you talk about your company to your friends or acquaintances (e.g. in a bar), what kind of information you share?

Self-management

Lately self-management has been a hot topic. What do you think it means?

Have you made any changes to work organization regarding self-management or changes in hierarchy? Please specify.

Why have these changes been made?

Which steps and decisions have been important while moving towards self-management?

How about its strengthening and maintaining?

What kind of experiments have you had?

What is your next target regarding self-management?

Please list the good sides of self-management

What is working well? What are the biggest successes?

What are the challenges encountered?

Which have been the most significant failures or false tracks?

Power and decision making

What do you think about the relation between responsibility and power in your company?

How about the relation between responsibility and freedom?

Who has formal and who informal power in your company?

How are decisions made in your company? (Ask for examples)

Please give some examples when joint decision-making has been working well.

Please give some examples when it has failed.

Management, organization

How do you choose teams/collaboration groups/projects?

*How many levels of hierarchy do you have? How do they show in every day work?
(Ask for examples)*

Have your company's internal activities changed during the last 1 or 2 years? If yes, please specify. How it was before and how it is now?

How are the goals set to your work defined?

How do you solve conflicts?

If someone slacks off, is late, does not perform his/her duties, how do you interfere?

If something goes wrong, who is responsible for further actions?

Information:

How does your company make sure that everyone has the right information at right time?

What kind of information is open to everyone?

What kind of information is restricted?

Well-being:

What wellbeing at work means to you?

How is employees' well-being at work supported in your company?

How do you intervene if someone is working too much and giving signs of burnout?

Have you had any problems regarding coping at work, motivation or well-being at work?

Where do you think they originate and how were the problems solved?

What kind of traditions of rewarding and career planning support do you have?

7.2. APPENDIX II – Interview themes and example questions for normal workers

Background questions:

Job title and duties

How many years have you been in working life?

Moreover, in this company?

Are you taking part in some team(s)?

-What does your team do?

- Does your team have a team leader?

- Is she/he your superior? If not, who is? (if any)

Orientation:

(Please tell what your tasks are?)

(Please tell the positives sides of this company. And the negative ones?)

If you talk about your company to your friends or acquaintances (e.g. in a bar), what kind of information you share?

Decision making and power

What are the things you can decide yourself? What kind of decisions need a permission or a discussion? With whom?

How are decisions made in your company? (Ask for examples)

What do you think about the relation between responsibility and power in your company?

How about the relation between responsibility and freedom?

Who has formal and who informal power in your company?

*Please give some examples when joint decision-making has been working well.
Please give some examples when it has failed.*

In what ways are you able to influence your work content? Are you allowed to influence your work content?

Can you decide yourself how to do your work? If yes, which parts are subject to your decisions and which not?

Collaboration

With whom, when and how do you collaborate?

How do you choose teams/collaboration groups/projects?

Do you think that the way you and your team members take actions has changed during the last 1 or 2 years? If yes, please specify.

Managerial work, organization and management

In your opinion what is the role of a superior in your organization. How should it be? What kind of things make you and your colleagues step out and take leadership?

How many levels of hierarchy do you have? How do they show in every day work? (Ask for examples)

How are the goals set to your work defined?

Have you been involved in defining your company's strategy and vision? If yes, please specify how.

Have your company's internal activities changed during the last 1 or 2 years? If yes, please specify. How was it before and how is it now?

How do you solve conflicts? Please give an example where you were involved.

If someone slacks off, is late, does not perform his/her duties, whose responsibility is it to interfere?

If something goes wrong, who is responsible for further actions?

What kind of traditions of rewarding do you have?

Information:

What kind of information you have access to? What is restricted for you? Is getting information easy?

Do you think you have enough information regarding your work / decision-making? Is it too much / too little?

Well-being:

What wellbeing at work means to you?

How is well-being at work supported in your company?

Have you had any problems regarding coping at work, motivation or well-being at work?

Where do you think they originate and how were the problems solved?

How do you intervene if someone is working too much and giving signs of burnout?

Self-management

Lately self-management has been a hot topic. Do you think your company follows the self-management principles? If yes, please specify how and vice versa.

- *(If the interviewee knows what self-management means)*

Please list the good sides of self-management

Please list the essential challenges and downsides of self-management

Have you made any changes to work organization regarding self-management or increase of hierarchy? Please specify. Good sides and downsides?

Have you made any experiments related to self-management?

Is it possible to dissolve hierarchy in your organization?

If yes, why?

If not, why?

What appeals to you in self-management? What are your concerns regarding self-management?

7.3. Appendix III – First 44 analysis categories

The number indicates the number of times the theme was mentioned

1	ability to concentrate on a single thing
18	adequate recovery
57	affecting one's work content + JC
1	attitude towards failures
6	avoiding responsibility
22	barriers towards job crafting
19	clearly defined practices
25	community
23	company feature
18	concrete way to support wellbeing
25	definition of well-being
13	difference to a traditional organization
58	freedom
8	getting help
49	humanity toward others
5	impostor syndrome
22	inequality
15	interference at low threshold
73	intervening wellbeing issues
5	lack of career path
11	lack of feedback
5	lack of support
26	meaningfulness
27	mentally demanding
6	mercifulness towards workers
12	not doing as agreed
15	occupational health care
7	openness
50	personality affecting wellbeing
5	person-culture fit
8	poorly handled conflict
15	recognizing your own workload
6	recreational activities
29	results vs wellbeing
33	role of HR
44	showing appreciation towards workers
42	something is unclear for the worker
22	taking problems seriously
1	the feeling of being an outsider
61	threats

1	uncertainty about one's own abilities
48	values of the company
31	wellbeing know-how
41	workload